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Chapter 1

Jasmin groggily opened her eyes. Her scales felt sticky with salt, and cold ocean water washed over her body.

Where am I? Jasmin thought. Long, wet strands of seaweed stuck to her wings. She irritably tried shaking them off, and when that didn't work, Jasmin had to peel the seaweed off her wings and unwrap it from her horns.

How did I get here? She wondered. A sudden pain pulsed through her head and the hybrid rubbed her temples, trying to ease her severe headache. Jasmin remembered how she'd plunged in the crashing waves, trying to float on the tree that had caused her to almost drown.

How was she was even alive? Her head was aching from thinking so much.

After her headache had eased to a dull throb, Jasmin peered around. She was behind a large rock, next to a pile of seaweed. She peeked over the rock.

Two dragons, one an elegant caterpillar green, another dark blue and orange. They were looping through the stormy sky, and faint laughter reached Jasmin's tired ears.

It wasn't the fact that two dragons were playing in such harsh weather that she found them so strange; it was because they each had two pairs of large, vibrant wings, one overlapping another, smaller one. Their wings looked like a butterfly's, but they were beautiful.

"What in all of Pyrrhia?" Jasmin muttered to herself, rubbing her eyes to make sure that the salt in them weren't making her see things. Four wings? She'd gone to almost the entire continent, thanks to her job, and she had never seen a single dragon that looked like this.

They didn't look like hybrids, just...extremely large and beautiful butterflies.

Perhaps Jasmin was on another island. Or a whole different continent, full of butterfly dragons. A sudden commotion interrupted her thinking. Three new dragons, their yellow bodies striped with black, had approached the flying dragons, their bee-like wings buzzing furiously.

One of the butterfly dragons, the green one, let out a scream as the patrol started attacking them, and Jasmin watched in awe and shock as fiery strands of fire twisted out of her wrists, heading straight at one of the attacking dragons.

Chapter 2

Jasmin watched as the red-orange ropes whipped around in the blowing wind. She looked on with surprise as another dragon shot out of nowhere and started fighting the battle of yellow-and-black dragons.

This dragon was forest green, with flecks of gold scales glimmering as she moved. At first, Jasmin thought she was a RainWing, since the mystery dragon had two wings. But her wings were shaped like huge, curving leaves, and there was a ferocious glint in her dark brown eyes that Jasmin had never seen in any RainWings except Queen Glory.

The green butterfly dragon yelped as a black dragon with orange splotches reached out with outstretched claws. She produced more fire from her wrists. They knotted together, and the green dragon started creating more of it. The strands tangled around her horns, wings, and her entire body, and the wind blew her towards Jasmin.

"Swordtail!" Jasmin heard the butterfly dragon cry as she whisked away from the others. The hybrid quickly camouflaged into her surroundings, not wanting to be seen by her. The other dragon, the deep blue one with shades of orange, turned around and flew towards her.

"Luna!" Swordtail, as the green dragon had called him, called. As he drew nearer, Jasmin saw that triangular spots of white flecked his body. Luna reached out helplessly towards Swordtail. Jasmin watched Luna being pulled towards the ocean by the uncontrollable wind.

What about the other dragon? She wondered. The leaf-dragon was left to battle the patrol of black-and-yellow dragons all by herself. She was strong and fast, but no one could take on three full-grown dragons by themselves.

Except a fully-trained assassin.

Jasmin hesitated. What if Luna and Swordtail and their savior were the bad ones? But they looked no older than her. And they looked so frightened. What self-respecting dragon would take on two dragonets that were so happy?

When the dark green dragonet let out a hiss of pain as one of the yellow dragons clawed her shoulder, Jasmin didn't stop to think as she launched herself, still invisible, towards the battle to help her.

Chapter 3

Jasmin grabbed one of the patrol dragons and skillfully snapped his neck swiftly. He fell to the far-away ground. The green dragon looked around in surprise, then continued battling the other two dragons.

Jasmin saw a red-and-black dragon aiming at the leaf dragon's neck, and she leaped forward to intercept her. The hybrid swiftly clawed his eyes, which were a startling, emotionless white. She let out a screech of pain, and Jasmin grabbed her by the horns and flung her to the rocky ocean. The red dragon fell with a painful crack, and Jasmin was certain that she was dead.

A black dragon with orange splotches, the one she'd seen at first, twirled around, trying to grab the invisible dragon that had taken down his companions. Jasmin narrowly dodged a vicious swish of his tail, which she saw had a sharp tip that smelled strongly of poison.

She whirled around and thrust her tail-barb through his heart. The green dragon watched the last attacker let out a blood-curling shriek, and Jasmin yanked her tail out of his corpse. She watched the body fall to the soft grass, then shimmered back to her normal colors.

"Who are you?" The green dragon snarled.

"I just helped you kill your enemies," Jasmin pointed out. "I'm clearly on your side. First, tell me where I am."

"This is Dragonfly Bay. Who are you?" She demanded again.

"No, I mean, what is this continent or whatever called?" Jasmin rolled her eyes, impatient for an answer.

"Pantala," The other dragonet looked slightly surprised, but otherwise still indignant. "Who are you? If you don't tell me, I'll rip

you apart and set an army of bullet ants on you."

"You could try," Jasmin shrugged. "I'll tell you my name if you tell me yours."

The strange dragon hesitated, then, scowling, replied.

"Sundew."

"I'm Jasmin." She said. "Can you tell me how far away I am from Pyrrhia?"

"Where?" Sundew asked.

Jasmin's heart sunk. How could she get home when the dragons who lived here didn't even know Pyrrhia's name?

Chapter 4

Jasmin frowned down at the body of one of the dead bodies.

"How did you kill them all?" Sundew growled. "No- how did you appear out of thin air?"

"Why are these dragons chasing you?" Jasmin asked drily. "And if you need to know, I have plenty of fighting experience. More than you, I should say."

Before Sundew could snap an indignant retort at her, the hybrid added, "Now, do you know where I can stay before getting back to my home?"

"Where I'm staying, but I can't trust you yet," The green dragon hissed. "And that's all I know."

"So, I'm guessing you don't live here," Jasmin commented airily. "But don't you owe me something? I just saved your pitiful life, and again, I could have killed you, and I still could, but I didn't, didn't I? Or I could have helped those other dragons."

"Hmph." Sundew still looked reluctant. "But if you touch a single-"

"Okay, I won't hurt whatever strange things you have in your base," Jasmin interrupted impatiently. "Just tell me where it is."

After Sundew directed her to the camouflaged cave she was staying in, Jasmin left to search for it. She finally found the moss, vine and seaweed pattern in front of a carefully camouflaged cave entrance. Cautiously pushing the plants aside, the hybrid stepped inside.

She heard a muffled squeak, and Jasmin saw a small golden-yellow dragonet with black splotches looking, terrified, at her. Her glasses were trembling, along with her entire body.

"Who are you?" Jasmin asked tiredly.

"You can't- you won't hurt-" The dragonet stammered.

"You aren't very intimidating." Jasmin saw that she had four bee-like wings, just like Swordtail and Luna's attackers. "Three moons, did Sundew send me into a trap? Because this is going to be the shortest fight I'm going to be in. Didn't she just see me in battle?"

"You know Sundew?" The golden dragon asked, her hazel-brown eyes glinting with interest. All her fright seemed to have washed away.

"She told me to come here," Jasmin glanced around and saw that the strange dragon was standing over a large, golden-ish object. "What's that? And who are you?"

"Oh," The other dragon perked up. "That's Blue. I mean, inside his cocoon, of course. But he's in there. His Metamorphosis just started. And I'm Cricket. Who are you? Should I be afraid of you? Why did Sundew send you here? How do you know about her? Did you see Luna and Swordtail?"

"His what?" Jasmin blinked at all the questions, then decided to ask about her first statement.

"Oh, you aren't from around here?" Cricket blinked. "Wait- you're not a SilkWing! Are you from the Distant Kingdoms?"

It seemed like it would be a long day.

Chapter 5

"Are you a SilkWing?" Cricket asked curiously. "Maybe a SilkWing-LeafWing hybrid?"

"I don't know and I want to know what that is," Jasmin replied. "But no."

"Okay! So you're from the Distant Kingdoms?" Cricket guessed.

"How about this," Jasmin sighed. "You tell me what happened to you and what a SilkWing and LeafWing is and some other things about this place."

"I'd love to," The golden dragonet beamed, and Jasmin had the impression that she should get comfortable. "Well, SilkWings and LeafWings are two of the tribes in Pantala. This is Pantala, by the way. The other tribe- my tribe- are the HiveWings..."

Jasmin listened with great concentration as Cricket explained everything she knew about the Tree Wars, flamesilks, LeafWings, and Queen Wasp.

She also talked about how she, Blue, Sundew, and Swordtail stole the Book of Clearsight, and how they'd freed Luna from the flamesilk cave.

"So you're the only HiveWing who can't be controlled by Queen Wasp," Jasmin frowned. "And Blue and Luna's a flamesilk. Sundew's a LeafWing, and she's supposed to be dead. Her whole tribe should be dead. And Swordtail- what can he do?"

"Um, he's very...loud?" Cricket tried.

"Okay, skip that." Jasmin let out a small yawn. "I'm tired, so I'll just rest for a bit, alright?"

"Okay," The HiveWing nodded, then went back to her spot by Blue's

cocoon. "Wait- one more question. What's your name and tribe?"

"That's two questions," Jasmin pointed out. "But I'll answer them both anyways. My name is Jasmin. And you're right. I'm a hybrid."

Before Cricket could open her mouth to speak, Jasmin curled up on the cold stone floor and closed her tired eyes. It had been a long day with lots of fighting and talking.

All she could do was rest and hope for the best.

Chapter 6

Jasmin heard the sounds of talking when she woke up. She was slightly confused when she didn't wake up next to Moon or Kinkajou or Qibli or Winter or Turtle.

Then she remembered that she was in Pantala.

"...gained conscious," That was Sundew. Jasmin opened her eyes and found herself in the large cave with Cricket and the LeafWing.

Someone was pacing through the cave, his dark blue and orange flecked with white triangles.

"Hello," Cricket turned around to look at her. "You're awake! This is Swordtail."

"I know," Jasmin informed. "He's the dragon who was abandoned the fight."

"But- Luna-" Swordtail stammered.

"Hm. You're still here," Sundew scowled at Jasmin.

"Yes." Jasmin nodded. "I can leave right now, if you want."

"Wait! Don't go!" Cricket pleaded, blocking her path as Jasmin headed out the cave. The hybrid hissed as she almost slammed into the HiveWing. "Tell me about the Distant Kingdoms! Please?"

"Okay," Jasmin growled. "The first thing you need to know is that I don't like being touched. The second thing to know is that you need to calm down."

"Yup. Definitely. Got it," Cricket sat down, her tail thumping the ground eagerly. "Go on, please."

"Fine." Jasmin thought for a minute. "The Distant Kingdoms, as you call it, is called Pyrrhia. And there are seven tribes."

"Seven?" Swordtail also gained interest of her story.

"Yes," Jasmin confirmed. "There are the SandWings, SkyWings, SeaWings, IceWings, RainWings, MudWings, and...the NightWings." She scowled as she remembered the tribe that kidnapped the RainWings and killed her father.

"Why-" Cricket interrupted.

"So, the SandWings have a tail-barb and scales any shade of yellow," Jasmin ignored her, then shimmered into her SandWing form. Sundew narrowed her eyes, but said nothing. "They can survive without food and water for a long time, and their scales radiate with warmth. SkyWings..."

After explaining about all the tribes, the War of SandWing Succession, and all the queens and palaces, Cricket and Swordtail started asking questions about herself.

"Well, you probably know I'm a hybrid because I just told you," Jasmin began. "I'm a SandWing-RainWing hybrid. And the NightWings killed Coyote."

"Oh no!" Cricket gasped.

"He was my father," Jasmin explained bitterly. "And I was trained by a *NightWing*, out of all the tribes. And his name was *Deathbringer*."

That, or course, caused Cricket to ask her what the NightWing had trained her for.

Chapter 7

"Well, that isn't really your business, isn't it?" Jasmin thought about how Winter had spat at her face that she was monster. She didn't want that to repeat again.

"Oh- I'm sorry," Cricket's face fell. "I was just-"

"It's alright," Jasmin sighed. They'd know soon, anyways, and what harm would that do? "I'll give you a hint: I work in the Scorpion Den, which is a ruthless place with lots of fights and murders."

"You must be some kind of fighter," Swordtail guessed.

"I get payed," Jasmin offered.

"A murderer," Sundew said gruffly.

"I can see that you're kidding, but you are exceptionally close," Jasmin told the LeafWing. Sundew looked startled as Cricket bounced up and down.

"I know! You're an assassin!" She declared. Jasmin nodded warily as the HiveWing grinned widely.

"That's just another reason why we shouldn't trust you," Sundew snapped. "You could turn around and kill us any moment right now."

"That is true, but I didn't, right?" Jasmin pointed out. "And what would I need to kill a bunch of pathetic dragonets for?"

Sundew opened her mouth, perhaps to say that she wasn't a pathetic dragonet, but Swordtail cut her off.

"Sundew, I think we should trust her," He insisted. "She really could've killed us all when the HiveWings attacked us."

"I vote to trust Jasmin," Cricket offered.

"Exactly," Swordtail nodded, then pointed at Sundew. "Outvoted."

Jasmin looked thoughtfully at the three of the Pantalan dragons. They'd just met, and two of them wanted her to stay.

"Fine," Sundew grumbled. "You can come if you want."

"I never said I wanted to," Jasmin pointed out.

"No! Please stay?" Cricket looked at her pleadingly.

"But yes, I'll stay," Jasmin gave in with a sigh. She needed to get back to Pyrrhia. She needed to go to her friends.

But were they her friends anymore? Jasmin didn't know.

She remembered how Winter had snarled at her, had promised Icicle to kill one of them.

How Ex-Queen Scarlet had wanted her to kill everyone in Jade Mountain.

Jerboa was still her friend. Her best friend. It wasn't fair to give up hope on Jasmin's best friend. Besides, she needed to save Pyrrhia from Moon's prophecy and Scarlet.

But they don't really need me now, right? Her mind whispered. *Jerboa and the others can wait.*

I need to save this continent first.

Chapter 8

For the next few days, where all of them waited for Blue's Metamorphosis to end, Jasmin went out to hunt for food. She'd mostly survived on the Scorpion Den for food, with some exceptions at Jade Mountain, so she wasn't the best hunter.

But hunting prey was like hunting dragons, wasn't it? Similar, anyways, to Jasmin. Except all the fighting and growling and death threats.

"Just fruits for me, thanks," Swordtail shook his head violently when Jasmin offered half her seagull to him. "Maybe some vegetables, if you find any."

"Well, I didn't," Jasmin ripped the seagull's wings off and chewed slowly. "Why don't you just get used to meat?"

Swordtail was looking openly horrified at the thought of eating prey, so Jasmin finally pointed him to the direction where she'd seen a couple of fruit trees.

"Aren't you excited?" Cricket asked.

"Um...about what?" Jasmin blinked, confused. Did they find out a way to defeat Queen Wasp?

"Blue's coming out of his cocoon today!" She bounced up and down.

"Okay." Jasmin had no idea what Blue was like, or what he looked like, but from the HiveWing's descriptions, he was very kind and shy and perfect. Swordtail had said that he was the most innocent dragon he'd ever met.

Sundew had called him a pathetic caterpillar.

"What do we need to prepare? What if he's different?" Cricket fretted.

"He'll be fine," Swordtail assured her, tucking a pile of fruits close to him. "We just need some food when he comes out. Blue would be hungry after five days without any food."

Jasmin had no idea what was happening, but Cricket seemed very nervous.

"Doesn't he just wake up after sleeping?" She asked Swordtail. "And has awesome silk powers?"

"No," The SilkWing shook his head. "SilkWing dragonets are born without wings, and they grow their wings during their Metamorphosis."

It would be weird to grow up without wings. Jasmin couldn't imagine not being able to fly. If she was a SilkWing, she wouldn't even have wings yet.

Thy hybrid was uncomfortably aware that she was about a year younger than Cricket, Sundew, and Swordtail, and held onto the thought that she was more capable than any of them.

She hoped.

"Did you see that?" Cricket suddenly gasped. Jasmin looked over at the orange bundle of silk on the ground, and saw in writhe on the ground.

Chapter 9

"Blue! Can you hear me?" Cricket rushed closer to the flamesilk cocoon. The top of the silk bundle split open, and Jasmin caught a glimpse of purple and blue scales, and a pair of indigo antennae.

"Woah," She also drew towards the wriggling cocoon, taking care to avoid Cricket's twitching wings. "So this is what the end of a SilkWing Metamorphosis looks like."

"Give him some space." Swordtail swished his long blue tail so that she had to flinch out of the way.

"He's almost out!" Cricket gasped. Even Sundew was looking interested, her dark brown eyes glinting with excitement and something else like hunger.

Sure enough, a long, elegant snout poked its way out of the silk, and she saw dark blue eyes meeting her own bright green eyes.

"Blue!" Cricket yelped. Jasmin watched as bright blue, aquamarine, and purple scales squirmed onto the stone floor, and almost shut her eyes when she saw the glimmering morpho butterfly blue, shining like jewels. Blue really was as beautiful as the HiveWing had described.

"Cricket," He breathed. "You stayed."

"Of course I did," She laughed.

"Hmm. I bet it was...boring?" The SilkWing guessed with a smile.

"Yup." Cricket beamed at him. Blue turned to Swordtail.

"Swordtail!" He cried. Swordtail gave him an orange.

"Hey," He grinned.

"Do you remember when you came out of your Metamorphosis, and

me and Luna were waiting for you?" Blue asked.

"With her weird banana mash cake and a box of honey drops?" Swordtail answered. Blue laughed and smiled even more widely when he saw Sundew. Then he saw Jasmin.

"Oh- who are you?" The SilkWing looked surprised, and a bit nervous.

"Jasmin, nice to meet you." She glanced at his surprised expression. "I'm not from here. Nothing new for you, probably, with all the action you've been through."

"Oh, Cricket, she's from the Distant Kingdoms!" He breathed. "You were totally right!"

"I know!" The HiveWing dragonet cried. "I'm so excited! And Jasmin's coming with us! And she's an assassin!"

"An assassin?" Blue was looking so terrified that Jasmin laughed, and that just earned her another wide-eyed look. "But isn't that dangerous?"

"I'm not, don't worry," The hybrid assured him. "I just saved everyone's lives."

"Hrmm. Alright," Blue still looked worried.

"Can you actually make flamesilk?" Sundew asked, looking up from rummaging around in her leaf pouches. The SilkWing held out his wrists and a flow of fiery silk erupted out of them. Sundew inspected the strands, then nodded approvingly and scooped it up in a stone jar.

What is she up to? Jasmin wondered, glancing at the jar as it slipped back into its pouch. *Does it have something to do with violence?*

Because I'm totally in.

Chapter 10

"We need to get moving," Sundew ordered after a day, when Jasmin had explained everything to Blue. "We've already been here for too long."

"So we could go back to Wasp Hive," Cricket explained, pointing to a hive on a map of Pantala. It was closest to Dragonfly Bay. "Or...Jewel Hive."

Her face fell a bit at the words.

"Why does Jewel Hive make you feel so sad?" Blue asked, sidling closer to the HiveWing dragonet.

"Oh, it's nothing." Cricket smiled a bit at him. "It's just where my mother went after she left us."

Jasmin thought about how Coyote had been killed. Had left Euphoria in a devastated state, left her alone to survive however she could with her mother in the rainforest and Scorpion Den. She wondered how it would be if Euphoria left her.

Jasmin shivered at the thought. She didn't want her mother to leave. Or Jerboa. Or Kinkajou, Moon, Turtle, Qibli.

Even Winter.

"Why would any mother leave her own dragonets?" Blue asked sadly.

"Maybe she got killed in Jewel Hive," Jasmin suggested, then added, "I'm joking! I'm joking!" at Cricket's horrified face.

"But Jewel Hive could be the place to find Luna or the Chrysalis," The HiveWing said after a moment.

"It is nearer," Swordtail nodded.

"And Lady Jewel is different from the other Hive rulers," Cricket let a smile creep on her face, and Jasmin leaned in curiously. "And I know the exact thing we need to get in there."

A few minutes later, they were flying through a thunderstorm towards Jewel Hive.

"Why did I say this was a good idea again?" Jasmin grumbled, irritated orange creeping up her scales as drops of rain splattered her whole body.

"You just turned orange!" Cricket gasped, her hazel brown eyes lighting up in excitement. "And now red!"

"I turn orange orange and red when I'm frustrated and annoyed and sometimes angry," Jasmin said through gritted teeth as cascade of water splattered her snout.

"At the raindrops or Cricket's questions?" Blue asked anxiously.

"Your innocence," Jasmin couldn't help but laugh at his face, which was crinkled with worry. "Actually at the raindrops."

Chapter 11: Another really good drawing of Jasmin as well as some appreciations

[image]

I've just got a drawing of Jasmin from @GellatheDusted! Thank you for this picture! I really love this one! I'm sorry I can't upload it on this chapter, but the Wifi is really slow nowadays, and if I can, I'll sneak it in during school!

And let's not forget @General_Serpentine, who made finding a cover for this book way easier! Thank you again for the drawing!

Chapter 12

When Sundew, Blue, Cricket, Swordtail, and Jasmin arrived at the entrance of Jewel Hive at dawn, Jasmin was surprised to see hundreds of stands crammed together in front of them.

"What is this?" She asked Cricket.

"It's the Glitterbazaar," The HiveWing explained. "We just need to camouflage into the crowd."

"How?" Sundew asked, but Cricket wasn't listening. The little HiveWing slipped through the densely packed stands, and finally stopped at one with bright flowing cloaks and fabrics.

"In Jewel Hive, the HiveWings wear cloaks and headdresses," She explained, then searched through the massive baskets filled with the bright clothings.

"Eww. No. Not ever." Jasmin wrinkled her snout when Cricket held up a bright purple cloak with blue fastenings. "I'd rather face an army of NightWings than wear that thing. Besides, I can change into a HiveWing or SilkWing anytime."

"Really?" Swordtail looked at her eagerly. Jasmin thought for a moment, then let dark red scales the color of glimmering rubies wash over her, her back fading slowly into black. Her tail-barb vanished, and Jasmin curled it in safely around her body.

"Cool!" Blue smiled. "Can you change into a SilkWing as well?"

Jasmin let light purple scales, with glints of bright blue and turquoise, shimmer over her usual colorful scales. Her usual colors, just lighter.

"Wow," Cricket blinked. "That's really awesome."

"Well, being a HiveWing is easier," Jasmin shrugged. "But I've still only got two wings that also look nothing like a LeafWing's."

"Well, I guess you're safe," Sundew's mouth curved up slightly. "Well, safer than me, anyways."

Chapter 13: Nothing lol

:D

This was a chapter for news but I deleted it lmao

Chapter 14

"Well, here's the thing," Cricket smiled slightly. "Even HiveWings wear colorful cloaks and things, so there really isn't much difference even in your disguise. But it's really cool, and I think you might still need it."

"Eww, who in the right mind would want to wear this thing?" Jasmin wrinkled her snout as the HiveWing held up the purple cloak again. She shifted back into her SilkWing colors and glanced at the others.

"I'd happily exchange your cloak with mine," Sundew offered, glaring at Blue, who showed her a bright pink silk cloak.

"Um, I think I'll keep this," The hybrid quickly fastened the cloak around her neck and adjusted it so that it would cover her wings. Cricket dug through a basket of head adornments, and held up a mass of light blue silk strands, with a thin, darker purple veil.

"I am NOT wearing that ridiculous thing," Jasmin ducked when Cricket tried draping the silk around her horns, then grudgingly let her entwine the soft strands around her head in a manner that made the veil fall over her brilliant green eyes.

"It hides the fact that you have no antennae," Cricket explained patiently, and Jasmin tried not to flinch away as she brushed against her scales.

"I am overly ready for this Glitterbazaar," She grunted. "Winter and Qibli would fall over laughing when they see me."

"Well, I think we're ready now," Cricket announced.

"FINALLY," Sundew stomped over the fallen cloaks and headdresses. "I'm so sick of this place already."

"Wait, don't we have to pay for all this?" Blue blurted.

"We are wanted criminals with a price on our heads," Jasmin raised an eyebrow at him. "I bet the HiveWings won't care if a couple of dragons steal a few bits of useless fabric."

"I guess I could leave that yam I dug up in the morning," Swordtail mused thoughtfully.

"Your cloak probably costs about one thousand yams," Cricket admitted.

"WHAT?" He shouted. "There is NO REASON why this DUMB CLOAK should cost SO MANY YAMS."

"How much does flamesilk cost?" Blue asked Cricket.

"A lot," She replied. "Why?"

The SilkWing held up his wrists, and strands of fiery flamesilk twisted out. He dropped it inside a stone vase on the counter.

"This could have been a small gift from an early customer," He said with a smile.

Chapter 15

"Well, can we go now?" Sundew asked impatiently, tapping the ground with her tail.

"Yes!" Jasmin stood up quickly, eager to get a second sooner out of the small tent.

"We need to be careful," Cricket warned. "We can't be spotted by anyone until it gets a bit more crowded."

"If that isn't what I have been doing my entire life," Jasmin rolled her eyes.

"Let's go." Swordtail glanced around for a few moments, then scurried away. Sundew quickly followed, and Blue scrambled after them.

"Cricket?" Jasmin looked back at the HiveWing. The dragonet was crouched in a corner, her wings still as stone.

"Oh, Jasmin," She breathed. "Look at this."

A small, pale-skinned creature peeked out of a crack in the counter. A dark scrap of fur was on top of its head, and it was wearing bits of spare fabric.

"Oh, a scavenger." Jasmin blinked at the pitiful animal. "You never saw one before?"

"Is that what you call reading monkeys in Pyrrhia?" Cricket asked.

"I didn't know they could read," The hybrid replied. "But yes. They taste horrid."

"You *ate* one before?" Cricket gasped, her dark eyes wide with horror behind her glasses.

"No, but that's what dragons from the Scorpion Den say." Jasmin

grinned. "Don't worry, I never bothered to. Too chewy-looking. I have- had- a friend named Winter who used to have a pet scavenger called Bandit, but he set him free."

"Wow," Cricket peered at the scavenger again. "They're so cute and interesting."

"One of these 'cute and interesting' creatures killed the most powerful queen in Pyrrhia, stole her treasure, and started a massive war that included a false prophecy and every single tribe." Jasmin told Cricket.

"Oh- I didn't- I'm sorry," She stammered. "B-but at least you didn't lose anyone?"

"Well, my father, yes," Jasmin reminded wryly.

"Right. Sorry, I forgot," The HiveWing pushed her glasses up nervously.

"Don't worry, the profit was pretty high then," Jasmin grinned as Cricket winced. "Now, we need to get going."

Cricket scrambled towards Swordtail, Blue, and Sundew, who was twitching her tail impatiently, and after a quick glance at the empty streets, she silently melted into the shadows. Even without her camouflaging skills, Jasmin was sneaky enough to disappear even when a dragon was talking directly at her.

"I will never get sick of watching you change your scales," Swordtail stated as Jasmin slipped towards them without making a sound.

"I wasn't invisible then, lizard-face," She hissed.

"Oh," The SilkWing blinked, confused. "Well, you're a great assassin, then."

Chapter 16: Upload Successful!

[image]

So, I finally got the drawing from @GellatheDusted to load in Wattpad, so if you didn't check out the updated chapter with the appreciations, here is the drawing!

Chapter 17

"HiveWings are coming in," Sundew reported. "We should get in the crowd now."

"Um, a question." Jasmin curled her tail in. "I am seriously claustrophobic, I tend to get violent when someone touches me, and someone might get poisoned accidentally. This is the most dangerous mission I have been on, since I'm not supposed to kill anyone. What do I do."

"That is a very good question," Blue quickly put in. "I don't want anyone to get hurt."

"You could curl your tail so the tip doesn't touch anyone," Cricket offered. "The claustrophobic and touching part, I'm not sure. I guess you'll need to try to ignore it?"

"Sure." Jasmin grumbled.

"Come on," Sundew whispered, and she let Cricket lead the way into the crowded bazaar. Jasmin trailed close behind the LeafWing's tail, Blue and Swordtail right besides her.

"You need to duck your head down," Blue directed softly. "Your steps need to be less swift and silent, and more hesitant. Your wings need to be at your side, not high above like you're about to take flight. And you need to relax a bit, but not like it's your home."

"Nowhere's my home," Jasmin snapped back, careful to keep her voice low. "My mother lives in the rainforest, my father used to live in the Scorpion Den, he's now dead, and all my friends are in grave danger."

"I know," The SilkWing soothed. "You just need to do what I told you to do. And most SilkWings don't look like they're about to jump right into battle."

"Fine!" She snarled. She made herself go slower, hesitating every few steps, ducking her head low, and and forcing her face to relax. She loosened her wings, drooping them so low they almost touched the ground. "Better?"

"Way better," Blue whispered.

"No one can see my face over this load of trash, anyways." Jasmin gestured at the headdress covering her eyes.

"Less talk, back there," Cricket ordered with a ridiculously high voice. "Or you'll regret it.

Jasmin wasn't sure whether to laugh or stay quiet. She dipped her neck lower, and scurried- she hated how she had to scuff the ground- after the HiveWing.

"Oh, this place is so boring," The older dragonet dragged, her voice pitchy and clipped. "It's always the same thing every year."

"You could try out the Rainbow Scales store," A HiveWing with a bright neon-blue cloak and a mass of frizzy strings on top of her head offered. "It's really pretty, and it's new!"

"Really?" Cricket squeaked, surprised.

"I'm just going over to the stand!" The HiveWing giggled, and lowered her voice. "To be honest, I go there to get more ideas I could use! Don't tell anyone!"

"Your secret's safe with me," Cricket promised, smiling. "I'll see you there!"

The HiveWing with the bright cloak waved, laughing, as she disappeared in the crowd.

Chapter 18

Night came along, and the crowds started to grow thinner and thinner.

"We need a place to hide," Swordtail said as all the dragons left. "Somewhere no one looks in."

"I have the perfect place to hide," Cricket declared. Jasmin threw off her cloak and shook the headdress off like it was an annoying bug.

"It better be perfect, because I'm already feeling grumpy and unnerved by all of this," She grumbled, shaking out her wings and finally letting furious red overtake her scales. "I hate glitter and bazaars. The Glitterbazaar was my worst nightmare."

"Well, I'm not sure whether you'll feel better about it," Cricket walked over to a house with a huge, dusty water tank right in front of it.

Jasmin shivered as she saw a poster that said:

Wanted, dead or alive

A runaway SilkWing, dangerous flamesilk, and HiveWing.

Below the words was a picture of Blue, Cricket, and Swordtail.

But no Sundew, Jasmin realized. *Probably because she doesn't want anyone to know that a LeafWing got into the most LeafWing-proof place in Pantala.*

"This place." Cricket flew up and onto the water tank. "It's where me and my sister used to hide in."

"It looks sturdy, and by the look of it, not closely looked after by HiveWings," Jasmin circled the structure and landed silently next to Cricket. "A good hiding spot."

"Won't the dragon in that house see us?" Blue asked, scrambling onto the water-filled tank.

"She might," The HiveWing's wings trembled. "But I think not."

"Do you know this dragon?" Sundew narrowed her eyes, thumping down on the structure.

"Yes." Cricket took a deep breath. "Cadelle. My mother."

They all climbed down into the water tank, where there was a large area at the top that was free from water. Jasmin stayed above with Cricket, watching out for anyone.

Jasmin glanced at the house, where she spotted a shadow of a dragon, chest moving up, then falling slowly. Cadelle was asleep. The hybrid took a double take at the balcony, where she thought she saw something moving.

"I think there's someone breaking in," She reported. "Two dragons, both HiveWings."

One of the dragons, hiding in the shadows, was waiting, her tail thumping the floor impatiently, while the other, smaller dragon fiddled with the lock.

Cricket let out a gasp.

"That's Katydid!" She whispered. "My sister! Why's she breaking into our mother's house?"

Chapter 19

Cricket zoomed towards the house just as Katydid unlocked the door.

"Oh, for moon's sake!" Jasmin rolled her eyes and flew after her, her scales shimmering into her surroundings. She landed on the floor next to the dragon hidden in the shadows and changed back to her normal self.

"Who-?" The dragon, a red HiveWing with black scales started to yelp, but Jasmin clamped a talon over her snout. She noticed how much bigger the other dragon was, and she looked older than everyone she'd seen in the entire continent.

"Stay quiet unless you want to die," Jasmin snarled, placing her claws on the HiveWing's neck, putting enough pressure for the older dragon to flinch, but not enough to snap her neck. She was painfully aware that the HiveWing was over twice her size, but the hybrid held her grip.

"Jasmin!" Cricket whispered loudly, stepping out of the house with another HiveWing behind her. "What are you doing? Let Lady Scarab go!"

"Please!" The mysterious HiveWing, who Jasmin guessed was Cricket's sister, begged. She had orange-yellow scales that were freckled with black. "Lady Scarab did nothing wrong! I dragged her into this!"

"Sure," Jasmin shrugged, releasing her grip. "Hi, are you Cricket's sister? Nice to meet you."

"You- your wings-" Katydid started, startled. "Your from-"

"The Distant Kingdoms, Katydid!" Cricket said with a hushed voice. "I can't talk now, because mother could wake up any second, but Jasmin's from the Distant Kingdoms!"

"Cricket, I- I can't talk now." The young dragon stammered. "But you need to know something."

"What-" Cricket began, but Katydid cut off her sentence.

"Cadelle is not your mother. Father is not your father." Katydid said, glancing back at the house. She was talking rapidly. "And I am not your sister."

With that, she and Lady Scarab set off into the dark night sky that looked like the inside of a NightWing's wings.

Chapter 20

"We need to go," Jasmin whispered. Cricket stood, completely still, on the balcony, blinking rapidly.

"Cricket!" She said sharply. When the older dragonet didn't move, Jasmin grabbed her in her talons, flapped her wings as hard as she could, and slowly made her way to the water tank.

"I'm fine. I can fly myself." Cricket struggled out of her grip and fluttered her wings. They landed on the tank and crept inside.

"What were you thinking, flying straight at a HiveWing's house?" Sundew scolded. "You could have been caught and tortured into telling them where we were!"

"I was following Cricket, who saw her sister- not sister- creeping into their not-mother's house."

"I thought Cadelle and Katydid were your mother and sister, Cricket," Blue sidled up to Cricket's side. "Is everything okay? What happened? Why are you so sad?"

"Cadelle isn't my mother. Father isn't my father. And Katydid isn't my sister," She said numbly.

"What?" Swordtail widened his eyes. "They aren't your family?"

"Cadelle isn't my mother. Father isn't my father. And Katydid isn't my sister." Cricket repeated. "How? Who are my real parents? Do I even have a sister?"

"Maybe you're a hybrid," Jasmin suggested. "A...SilkWing-HiveWing, maybe. Or HiveWing-LeafWing. Maybe that's why the mind control doesn't work on you."

"What if I am a hybrid?" The HiveWing's face twisted in worry and fright. "That's forbidden! Where are my real parents, then? Do they hate me? Is that why they put me here with a mother that hates me

and a father that ignores me?"

"I think it's not because they hate you," Swordtail said slowly. "I think it's because they know it's forbidden, and if the HiveWings find out, they'll get into serious trouble, and so would you."

"*You are not my daughter*- Cadelle was right," Cricket whispered sadly. "I was never her daughter."

"She could have been less OBVIOUS about it!" Jasmin growled. "Why bother adopting you when they hate you anyways?"

"Maybe she wanted to protect someone she loved," Blue offered. "Or it wasn't her choice."

Jasmin wished that they could find out more about Cricket's mysterious parents, but they had no time to spare.

"Come on, we need to go find the Chrysalis," She whispered. "Let's go."

And she flew out of the water tank, hoping desperately that they'd solve both problems very soon.

Chapter 21

"Midnight. Library. 5." Cricket read the words written on the neatly folded leaf they had found earlier on in the Glitterbazaar out loud. "We meet them at midnight in the library. Five. What could that mean?"

"Five...dragons will meet us?" Jasmin guessed.

"Five is too much." Sundew shook her head. "Maybe how many dragons should meet them?"

"Me, Blue, Cricket, Jasmin, and you," Swordtail listed. "But they don't know about Jasmin."

"So no." Blue thought for a while. "Maybe how many steps to take inside the library?"

"No, the library has nothing hidden inside it," Cricket explained. "I think we should go inside first."

"Um, is the door locked?" Jasmin asked. She tried opening the door, but it didn't budge. "Yes, it's locked."

"Can you pick locks?" Sundew asked.

"Maybe. I never really did it before. I assassinate, not steal." Jasmin stuck a claw inside the lock, ignoring Blue's horrified face. She felt a latch, but it didn't flick open when she picked at it. "This door is locked so only a key can open it."

"Five...maybe the key is somewhere on the fifth thing?" Cricket guessed. "Fifth stair...nope, there's only three. Fifth window? Hm. Only four."

"Cricket, who's this?" Jasmin asked. She was in front of a statue of a dragon with star-like scales scattered on her underwings. The dragon had a thoughtful face, and was reading a book. She had black scales.

She was a NightWing.

"Oh, that's Clearsight," Cricket explained. "She could see into the future like your friend could. She made the Book of Clearsight."

"Clearsight's a NightWing!" Jasmin cried. "I thought you said that you knew nothing about Pyrrhia!"

"We didn't!" Blue shrugged. "But you came along and told us about it. Clearsight could see into all possible futures, and she wrote the Book to warn the tribes about danger. She also made the SilkWings and HiveWings."

"You trusted a *NightWing?"* Jasmin started, but Sundew interrupted her.

"Hey, I think I found something?" She held up a key. "Let's stop arguing and get inside."

Chapter 22

So, I just want to repost this.

POST THIS IS YOUR NOT AFRAID TO TELL PEOPLE THAT YOU BELIEVE IN GOD. WHEN YOU CARRY A BIBLE, THE DEVIL GETS A HEADACHE. WHEN YOU OPEN IT, HE COLLAPSES. WHEN YOU READ IT, HE FAINTS. WHEN YOU LIVE IT, HE FLEES. AND JUST ABOUT WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO REPOST THIS, HE WILL TRY HIS HARDEST TO STOP YOU. BUT I JUST DEFEATED HIM, AS CAN YOU. 97% WILL IGNORE THIS. BUT REPOST IF YOU'RE PART OF THAT 3% THAT LOVES GOD AND WANTS TO SHOW IT!

I believe in God, but I don't read the Bible.

Also, some stuff I need to say:

If you want to, you can draw Jasmin or Twilightmoon/paw from 'Twilightmoon's Silence. Your art is more than welcome!

Also, Sunday I might not be able to update cuz I'm going on a plane.

Well, I need to sleep now, so I'll try to update tomorrow.

Chapter 23

"It's unlocked," Jasmin called softly as she turned the key. The door opened with a *click!*

"Come on," Sundew whispered, glancing back, and swept into the massive library. "I think I hear dragons."

Sure enough, Jasmin could hear voices quietly arguing.

"They aren't very sneaky for a secret undercover group that are planning to overthrow Queen Wasp," Cricket noted. "Are you sure we're in the right place?"

"I'm positive," Swordtail straightened up, and walked straight inside a cozy room with many pillows and beanbags and lots of blankets.

"AAAAHHH!" Jasmin peeked inside, making her scales invisible just in case they see her. Three SilkWings sat in a bundle of pillows, their wings trembling with fright.

"I knew they'd find us here!" One, who's scales were a dark orange with even darker wings and red underscales, whispered. She looked almost like a HiveWing, except there were no black scales on her body.

"Wait! It's me! I'm part of the Chrysalis in Cicada Hive!" Swordtail yelped, holding his arms up.

"And me!" Blue piped up, going in through the door.

"The runaway flamesilk!" Another SilkWing, this one male, exclaimed. He was a bright, neon blue, and Jasmin had to blink several times before getting used to his unusually bright colors. She saw large patches of white dotting his tail.

"Cricket?" Blue glanced back. The HiveWing dragonet hesitated, then jerkily stepped into the room.

"A HiveWing!" The orange SilkWing screamed, shoveling deeper into the pile of soft pillows. "Hide!"

The third dragon, a pale yellow SilkWing, burrowed in next to her. Jasmin noticed that one of her back wings were smaller than the other, sticking out in an awkward angle. She let out a whimper, digging backwards until she was almost out of sight.

"She's already seen us, you idiots!" The bright blue dragon snapped. He turned to Cricket. "We're not afraid of you, you monster!"

"She's on our side!" Blue cried. "Cricket's a friend!"

"Friends don't turn each other in because an evil queen invades their brain!" The pale yellow dragon squeaked.

"But it doesn't happen to her!" Swordtail put in. "Queen Wasp can't control her!"

Chapter 23

"Really?" The orange SilkWing peeped out of the pillows.

"Yes!" Cricket exclaimed. "Wasp can't seem to control me, for some reason."

Jasmin knew that she was still thinking of the hybrid theory, but Jasmin thought that was pretty unlikely. For a starter, there was nothing SilkWing about her, horns to tail.

Was it possible that she had only inherited the power to be uncontrollable by the queen?

"Well, in that case, I think we can trust her," The pale yellow SilkWing spread her butterfly-like wings out.

"She could be lying," The bright blue dragon grunted. "I don't trust HiveWings."

"I don't think these SilkWings would bust into a library with a mind-controllable HiveWing right besides them." The orange SilkWing offered.

"Fine. But if we get caught, it's your fault."

"Well, sorry for being so cautious," She faced Swordtail, Blue, and Cricket. "I'm Cinnabar, this is Tau, and the grumpy blue dragon is Morpho. We're part of the Chrysalis."

"They aren't very careful about minimizing details," Sundew observed quietly. "I thought an undercover group would be more cautious."

"I agree with so much force that I cannot even put them into words," Jasmin whispered. "These dragons are really unexperienced."

Sundew let out a snort.

"Have you seen Luna anywhere?" Swordtail asked hopefully. "Light green, SilkWing, and a flamesilk?"

"No, sorry." Tau shook her head. The dark blue SilkWing's head drooped.

"What does the Chrysalis do, anyways?" Cricket wondered out loud, glancing sympathetically at him.

"We're planning to overthrow Queen Wasp," Morpho explained. "We've got a few SilkWings on our side. Not enough to fight against thousands of HiveWings, though."

"Sounds like you need an army." Sundew walked past the door and into the small room. "Lucky for you, we have one."

The three SilkWings were silent for a moment, too shocked to speak.

"You're still alive," Cinnabar whispered, tears moistening her eyes. "We thought you were all dead."

"Well, we aren't," Sundew replied, startled at the SilkWing's genuine happiness. "And we're also planning to kill Queen Wasp."

"Yes!" Morpho cried. "We need an army to kill all the HiveWings and overthrow the queen!"

"I've waited all my life for this," The LeafWing shook off her cloak with a shake. "Who's in?"

Chapter 25: Some more news

So

I just realized.

School's started, and I haven't got a lot of time to write in this book.

Don't worry, I'll still update.

But it'll take a day or two for me to publish a chapter. My school ends at 3:00 PM, and it takes around 1 hour to get home, so it'll be about 4:00.

I also need to eat dinner and do homework, so basically it'll be about 6 or 7 before I can write.

So sorry for this, this story will take longer than I hope to finish.

Also, if you haven't yet, please check out my other story, 'Twilightmoon's Silence' if you read Warriors.

Anyways, I hope you enjoyed the story so far.

Chapter 26

"You can't do that!" Cricket cried. Jasmin cringed at Sundew's sudden betrayal.

I know the HiveWings are evil and everything, but is this really necessary? She wondered.

"Jasmin." She snapped out of her thought as the LeafWing called her name. "Are you coming in, or just standing there for the entire night?"

"There's another dragon here?" Morpho asked, his eyes narrowed with suspicion.

"Um, yes," Blue glanced at where the hybrid was nervously. "Her name is Jasmin, and she...you'll see."

Jasmin sighed.

"You guys are seriously making me come out like this?" She grumbled, stepping inside the small room. "Won't these SilkWings be kind of freaked out?"

"I don't see anything!" Cinnabar whispered.

"It's a ghost!" Tau cried, flinging a pillow at Jasmin's direction. She dodged smoothly, and kicked the pillow back at the SilkWing. She let out a squeal of fear and drew nearer to Morpho.

"Jasmin. Stop goofing around." Swordtail frowned.

"Fine. At least let me have some fun if you're going to drag me into this mess of a continent." Jasmin let her purple, navy, and turquoise scales shimmer into view, her tail-barb flicking threateningly. She let a slight hint of orange streak her ruff. "Happy?"

"She's not- her wings-" Morpho stammered.

"Yup," Jasmin said wryly. "I'm not from around here."

"You're from the Distant Kingdoms!" Tau realized.

"Um, yes, I think I already told you that. Sort of."

"Wow, your wings look so strange!" Cinnabar reached out a talon to touch her wing. Jasmin jerked back.

"Don't touch me," She growled. "I'm already unnerved enough in this tight place. I tend to get violent when something touches me. You don't want to know what my tail-barb does."

"It injects poison into your body and there's no cure," Cricket informed. "You die almost instantly."

"There is a cure," Jasmin cut in. "I just didn't tell you."

"Is that your only power?" Tau asked.

"Yes," Jasmin answered untruthfully. She hadn't told anyone in Pantala, not even Cricket, about her venom. It felt safer to keep a useful talent secret.

Just in case.

Chapter 27

"Are you joining the LeafWing army?" Sundew asked.

"No. This is too unexpected. You should have told me first," Jasmin shook her head. "We should go by the plan."

"And what is the plan, exactly?" Sundew retorted, her voice rising.

"Find out how Queen Wasp is controlling the HiveWings," Cricket said confidently. "And see how many HiveWings will be on our side."

"And kill Wasp," Swordtail interrupted. "And kill every other HiveWing."

Cricket flinched.

"Except you," He added quickly. "You can't be controlled."

"Leave the HiveWings alone!" Cricket cried. "Many of us hate Wasp. You can do whatever you want to her, but leave the others alone."

"Cut off the dragon's head, and the body stops attacking you." Jasmin agreed. "You should torture Queen Wasp. Ooh, can I stab her in the back and rip out her teeth? And stuff a Dragonbite Viper down her throat?"

"What's a Dragonbite Viper?" Sundew asked, interested.

"The only snake in Pyrrhia that's able to kill a dragon with one bite," Jasmin explained. "Their fangs have a deadly poison that slowly stops your heart, and when it passes through your blood, it's extremely painful. I know from experience that almost no one survives."

"I like those vipers," The LeafWing examined the hybrid closely. "Have you ever been bitten before?"

"No," Jasmin said. "But I like to use them sometimes to silence my victims when I really hate them."

"You don't mean dragons, right?" Tau asked cautiously.

"Exactly what I mean," Jasmin grinned. "I can still hear their screams in my head whenever I have a particularly bad day with little payment. It cheers me up."

Cinnabar went pale, and everyone edged away from the Pyrrhian dragon.

"Wait," Blue unfurled his antennae. "Do you hear footsteps?"

Jasmin stood silently, listening intently with her sharp ears. "I hear voices. I see HiveWing soldiers!" She announced in a whisper. "Everyone, hide!"

Cricket led everyone to the book drops where dragons returned their books. Cinnabar and Tau leapt inside one of them, shutting the door behind them. Sundew shoved Morpho inside another one, then pushed Swordtail through the door and shut it tight.

"Jasmin," Sundew whispered when Cricket and Blue had squeezed inside another book drop. "I know you can camouflage, but those soldiers might hear or feel you. I think you should go inside a book drop."

"I won't do that!" Jasmin hissed. "Those things are *tiny!* How am I supposed to survive? I'd rather face dumb Wasp!"

"Just go in," Sundew snapped, her eyes wide with alarm when she heard a loud *click*, followed by footsteps. "Before I push you in."

"Fine!" Jasmin snarled. She slipped easily into the book drop where Cricket and Blue hid. They jumped with surprise, and she flinched when Sundew dropped in after her, closing the door as she fell.

"**Search the library,**" An unfamiliar voice that rang through the large halls made Jasmin stiffen against Sundew's leaf-like wings. "**Don't stop until you find them.**"

Chapter 28

"Alright, alright," A grumpy voice grumbled. "I unlocked the door. I don't think they're here, though. Don't see anything."

He went silent, and Jasmin guessed that Wasp had taken control of his brain.

She was uncomfortably squeezed between Sundew's wings, that poked her shoulders, and Blue's large, bright wings, that hit her in the face. His purple tail was tangled around her legs, somehow, and Cricket's fast breathing and the tight space made Jasmin slightly nervous.

And she hated it.

Sundew must have felt her anxious need for fresh air, because she raised a silent talon to prevent her from shifting.

"**I saw them in this library.**" Wasp's voice growled close by. "**Find them, or I will burn you along with the library.**"

Jasmin felt Cricket stiffen. The hybrid's head snapped up as she heard a loud clatter.

"I'm sorry your majesty!" It was Cinnabar's voice. "We just came to the library to read. Our masters don't let us come to the library, you see. Please forgive us!"

"Don't tell Lady Jewel!" That was Tau. "She'll punish us horribly!"

"**And so she should,**" Wasp snarled. "**There were other dragons in the library.**"

"Just us, your majesty," Cinnabar's panicked voice made Jasmin admire her acts. "No one else."

"**I saw wings,**" Wasp remained suspicious. "**Blue wings.**"

"That would be our cousin Morpho," Tau put in. "He told us off and left. We're so sorry, your majesty."

"**Hmm. Very well.**" The HiveWing queen let out a low growl. "**But I will tell your queen that you have been disobeying orders, and you will be punished severely.**"

"Yes, your majesty." The footsteps faded, until Jasmin couldn't hear anything anymore. She looked curiously at Blue, but he shook his head, antennae waving in the air. After what seemed like an eternity, he finally whispered, "They're gone."

"Yes!" Jasmin cried. She shoved Blue's wings out of her face, untangled his tail, and leaped out of the book drop. She kicked it, hard, after everyone else had scrambled out.

"That's what you get for being SO UNCOMFORTABLE!" The hybrid glared at it, then turned to find Swordtail and Morpho spilling out of the other book drop.

"Um, are you going to poison that thing?" Blue asked nervously. "You look like you might."

"I think I will," Jasmin grinned. "*After* saving the world first."

Chapter 29: Some reminders (Nothing serious)

Hi

Um I noticed that some of the people who read this don't read the first book. So, in case you need it, the first book is called 'Assassin in Jade Mountain', which you'll find in my profile.

Just wanted to remind you that this isn't the only book!

Oh, and I'll ask a question right here.

Do you think I should write a book that shows Jasmin's backstory? Like how she became an assassin? Or should I just leave it plain and simple and not write the book?

Please feel free to share your opinion, and read 'Assassin in Jade Mountain'!

Chapter 30

"Luna wasn't here. She isn't here," Swordtail sighed sadly. "She must have survived, right?"

No one answered. Jasmin thought that it was likely that Luna had died in the storm. After all, she'd barely managed to land here.

"Where do we go now?" She asked Sundew.

"I think we should go see Lady Scarab," Cricket said unexpectedly. "She's the oldest dragon out of everyone else, so she must know how the queens before Queen Wasp controlled the HiveWings, right? And I want to know whether Katydid is...alright."

Jasmin remembered that Katydid could be nothing related to the HiveWing dragonet.

"Sure. It'll be useful," Sundew glanced around. They were near the water tower again, and Cricket escorted them to a huge mansion, where thousands of dragons laughed and danced along to music. SilkWings made drinks for the HiveWings, but Jasmin noticed that no one went inside the mansion.

"That's Lady Scarab's house," Cricket whispered. "Come on, let's go."

She walked casually into the crowd of dragons, and Blue, Swordtail, and Sundew followed. Jasmin hesitated before flashing back to invisible and flying over their heads.

After a while of partying and talking, the HiveWings in the crowd suddenly went silent, their heads snapped up high and their postures straight.

Their eyes were an emotionless white.

Cricket quickly ducked her head so that her veil covered her eyes.

Jasmin held her breath as two HiveWings marched up to the door

of the mansion. Lady Scarab emerged, her striped wings buzzing with annoyance. She couldn't hear their conversation, but Jasmin could certainly see that she was angry.

Suddenly, a HiveWing with gold and orange scales that were speckled with black walked out of Lady Scarab's house, and the guards marched her away. She followed without hesitation.

By now, all the HiveWing's eyes were back to normal, and many of them fled. Cricket whispered something to Swordtail, Blue, and Sundew, looked around for Jasmin, confused, and hurried towards Lady Scarab's mansion. Jasmin flew after her.

The HiveWing dragonet knocked on the door, and Lady Scarab opened it. She let Cricket in, holding the door wide open.

Jasmin frowned, and turned back to Blue, Swordtail, and Sundew.

Chapter 31

"Hey." Jasmin touched down lightly besides Swordtail.

"Where were you?" He asked. "For a second I thought you'd went to kill Wasp."

"No, you pathetic butterfly, I was above you the whole time," She informed. "Cricket should be coming out anytime soon."

"Well, I guess we just...wait here for her to finish?" Blue said unsurely. He took a glass of purple juice and peered inside curiously. "What's this made out of?"

Jasmin sniffed at the glass. "I wouldn't eat that if I were a vegetarian SilkWing."

"Oh." He quickly set the glass down. "What's it made from, though?"

"Caterpillars and sugar, from the smell of it. Maybe some animal's blood; I'm not very experienced at those things. Just enough to find poison in my drinks," Jasmin frowned. "This thing doesn't look appetizing. More like grape mush. Though it's not. That one looks like it's made from seagull blood and honey, by the way."

Swordtail set a glass of blood red punch down on the table again, going pale.

"Thank you for this information," Sundew grinned. "Perhaps I can convince Wi- a vegetarian friend of mine to drink this thing."

"I can't wait to see their face, then," Jasmin laughed. "But seriously, what's taking Cricket so long?"

"She's here now." Swordtail nodded towards the HiveWing dragonet, who was flying towards them with a paintbrush, some papers, and pencils in her claws.

"I have an idea," She said as soon as she landed besides them. "Let's

go back to the hiding place, and I'll explain it all to you."

"Did Lady Scarab know anything about your parents?" Blue asked. Cricket looked down at the ground.

"Yes. Katydid wasn't my sister. She's my mother." Her voice was strangled. "But my father was a HiveWing as well. Also, I found something out. Queen Wasp can't control Lady Scarab. She can't control Lady Jewel or Lady Cicada or any of the Hive rulers."

"Oh?" Sundew glanced at Cricket. "She was pretending all along?"

"Yup," Cricket grinned. "And I know a way to get HiveWings to overthrow their queen."

Chapter 32

They'd worked past midnight to finish writing the first part of the Book of Clearsight, where the NightWing had written her want of peace among the tribe.

Jasmin still didn't quite believe that a NightWing had wanted that instead of dominance over the world. *They all wanted power and everything from anyone in the entire continent. Why not take over a whole other piece of land, then?*

NightWings couldn't be trusted. Moon might have been different, but she had grown up in peace and with love and care. Jasmin knew that if Moon had grown up in the volcano, she'd be as good as dead with the RainWing-SandWing in her winglet.

As dead as Coyote was right now. Jasmin missed her SandWing father, and a pang of homesickness hit her as she thought of Euphoria.

If only Coyote was alive...maybe then I'd have been a different dragon. Maybe I wouldn't've shot Winter with my venom. Maybe I'd still be in Pyrrhia, sneaking out to see Coyote and hearing from him of the world outside the rainforest.

All this pain because of the NightWings.

"Jasmin?"

"Hm?" She snapped out of her thoughts. Cricket was looking at her expectantly.

"Are you okay?" She asked.

"I'm fine," Jasmin said absentmindedly. "Just missing my mother. And father, as always."

"Oh. Well, maybe you'll feel better if you get some sleep," Blue offered with a yawn. "Because that's what I'm going to do right

now."

"Maybe I will," Jasmin sighed. She laid down at the edge of the water tank, careful that her tail didn't touch the water. "Perhaps I'll wake up fresh and ready to attack. Or defend."

She closed her eyes, letting the voices around her die down. Suddenly, she felt cold creeping up on her scales like ice. Jasmin opened her eyes to see Qibli standing right in front of her.

"Qibli? I must be dreaming," She muttered. "Hello? Dream-Qibli? Why am I dreaming about you and not the rest of the winglet?"

"Jasmin!" The SandWing cried. "It's really you! You're alive!"

"Of course I am," She said, confused. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"Because I'm talking to you!" Qibli shouted, excited. "Moon's hearing this very conversation in her mind right now! I'm dreamvisiting you!"

Chapter 33

"Qibli, what-" Jasmin broke off with a gasp. "It's really you! Oh my moons, I didn't even think about dreamvisitors! It's so good to see you! Hi, Moon in Qibli's head! I'm alive!"

She'd forgotten how much Qibli looked like Coyote. Same sandy scales, same friendly black eyes, same unusual freckles. Jasmin felt a tug in her heart as she thought of her dead father again. She wished he could be in the Scorpion Den, anxiously waiting for news of his missing daughter.

"How are you?" He asked. "Are you okay? Where are you?"

"I'm in the Lost Continent, Qibli! There are three tribes in here and I'm trying to save the continent from an evil mind-controlling queen along with some friends!"

"You made friends there?" He wrinkled his snout. "Are they nice?"

"Some of them. Swordtail's a bit annoying, though, and Sundew isn't the friendliest dragon in the continent," She laughed. "But Cricket is nice enough, and Blue is just the definition of 'positivity' and 'gentleness'."

"How'd you get all the way to the Lost Continent?" Qibli asked.

"I got caught in a storm while visiting a friend of mine, and I washed up on a shore," Jasmin explained. She saw the strange expression on her friend's expression. "Is something wrong?"

"Well, a dragon from the Lost Continent got caught in the storm as well," He frowned. "And she's in Jerboa's hut right now. Her name's Luna; have you heard of her? She seems to know Blue and Swordtail and all the other dragons you're with right now."

"Oh, I saw her," Jasmin remembered the elegant caterpillar-green SilkWing. "She's alright? I thought she was dead. Oh, I'd better tell

Swordtail that Luna's fine. Tell her that Swordtail and Blue are alright. Blue's also a flamesilk, by the way."

"I have no idea what your saying but I'm happy for you and Luna," Qibli laughed. "Winter, Turtle, and Kinkajou will be so happy to hear that you're alive."

"Winter?" Jasmin sucked in a breath. "He's not mad?"

"Well, he was." The SandWing shrugged. "But I changed his one-sided mind and now he's thinking it's all his fault that you're probably dead."

"Tell him that I'm not and yes it was his fault!" Jasmin beamed- she normally didn't beam, but this was a miracle, to see her friend again- as Qibli began fading away.

"Wait! I need to tell you something!" He put in hurriedly. His yellow scales were growing fainter. "Animus magic- Turtle's magic- it isn't worki-"

Jasmin woke up with a start.

Animus magic doesn't work anymore?

Chapter 34

"Are you okay? You were muttering in your sleep." Blue glanced at Jasmin as she sat straight up. Swordtail was brushing drops of water off his tail, which must have fallen into the water while he slept. It was dripping from gloomy gray water. Sundew's eyes were closed, and in her talons were a jade frog and some wilted willow leaves. The LeafWing's eyes snapped open, and she quickly put the odd items into a leaf pouch.

"Blue! Qibli just dreamvisited me!" Jasmin cried. She saw the confused look on his face.

"Who's Qibli?" He asked.

"What's 'dreamvisiting'?" Swordtail paused and looked up from his dark blue tail.

"Qibli's a friend of mine. He visited me in a dream. I can't believe I didn't think about it!" Jasmin said in a rush. "Everyone's been looking for me, and Winter- another friend of mine- forgives me for trying to kill him! Everything's okay! More than okay!"

"How did he visit you in a dream?" Sundew asked. "And why did you try to kill a friend of yours?"

"You don't want to know about dreamvisitors; it's very complicated. And Winter was being annoying and insulted me." Jasmin touched the inside of her wing absentmindedly. She remembered how she used to have knives, poison, and venomous darts lined neatly inside, hidden by a sand-colored piece of cloth.

Jasmin was surprised to find one knife still strapped on, having survived the rough trip to Pantala.

She didn't even realize she had a knife. Jasmin realized that she must have packed it when leaving the rainforest after making a full recovery from the volcano.

I remember now...I think I had a couple more weapons. Probably was washed away. It was a miracle a knife had still survived.

Jasmin took the knife carefully out of its strap. Blue flinched.

"Is that a knife?" He stepped closer to Swordtail. The hybrid unsheathed the weapon slowly. Its blade was made of polished obsidian, the edge dipped in diamond. It was so clean that Jasmin could see her reflection in it. The handle had a nice grip, and was made from sturdy material.

"It survived the storm. I didn't realize I still had it." Jasmin remembered the knife very well.

It was the first weapon Deathbringer had given her, after all.

Chapter 35

"It's time you had your own weapon," Deathbringer said. "You need protection. What if you were all alone and a hungry panther came along and tried to eat you? In the rainforest, I can't protect you."

"Wow," Jasmin breathed as the NightWing handed her a knife. Its polished obsidian blade was smooth and tipped with diamond. It was lighter than any knife she had ever held. The handle was studded with a shiny black rock with cracks that was ruby red. She ran her claws over the smooth rock. "It looks dangerous."

"And it is." Deathbringer pointed at the rock. "That rock is made from volcanic lava. You can take it out and throw it at anyone. The instant it touches scales, it heats up until it gives a dragon burns they will never forget."

"But won't it hurt me?" Jasmin asked, worried lines furrowing her face. "I'll get burnt every time I touch the handle."

"But notice that when you touched it, it didn't burn you." Deathbringer laughed at her dumbfounded expression. "It was made by the smartest NightWing scientist. He made the knife so that the rock never hurts the first dragon that touched the rock."

"And I touched it." Jasmin sucked in a breath. "Is this knife mine now?"

"Yup." The older dragon grinned. "And today you'll learn how to throw that rock so that you'll be able to retrieve it when you throw."

And Jasmin had learnt to aim with such accuracy that the rock embedded itself in between the scales of a dragon. She already knew how to use a knife, so that was not a problem.

"When can I test it?" Jasmin whispered. Deathbringer gestured for her to follow him through the tunnel that led to the Kingdom of Sand.

"Right now."

"See that SandWing?" The NightWing breathed. Jasmin narrowed her eyes at a SandWing with a ridiculously large tattoo of a viper on his chest. He was alone in a dark ally, holding a stolen coconut in one talon.

"The one with a stupid tattoo and smug face?" She asked. Deathbringer muffled a laugh.

"That's the one. Now throw the rock at him," He whispered. "Aim carefully. If you fail, just kill him with the knife."

Jasmin pried the rock out of the handle, aimed carefully, and threw it at the SandWing. It hit him in the chest, hitting the open mouth of viper. The SandWing let out a scream dropping his coconut, but instead of staying in place, the rock fell to the ground.

"It was your first try." Deathbringer soothed. "Now go finish him."

Jasmin ran towards the pained SandWing and drew her knife from the inside of her left wing and stabbed him in the neck. Blood spilled out of his wound, and he let out a final gurgle before falling silent. The stolen coconut laid still, soaking up blood.

"I kind of wished that I'd be able to enjoy his pain for a bit longer," Jasmin grinned. "That was great! And look! Blood-flavored coconut!"

As she went to pick up the lava rock, she heard Deathbringer sigh, "I've trained her into a psychopath."

Chapter 36

"Hey, Jasmin. Did Qibli say anything about Luna?" Swordtail asked. Jasmin turned to him, snapped out of her daze.

"Hm? Oh, right. Luna's fine. She landed near my friend Jerboa's hut, and she's getting better." Jasmin was happy to see Swordtail and Blue's faces lighting up like two suns.

"She's alive! Swordtail! Luna's alright!" Blue cried. Sundew's mouth twitched upwards slightly, and fell down back into its usual straight line.

"I knew it!" Swordtail flared his wings. "I told you! I told you she'd be fine!"

"Be quiet!" Sundew hissed. "Someone might hear us."

"We still need to be careful," Jasmin agreed, sheathing her knife again. Her claw brushed the polished lava rock as she felt the light weapon in her talon again. "We're as dead as a NightWing in my one-meter radar if they find us."

"A gruesome comparism, but sure." Sundew examined the obsidian knife in her talons. "Can I see that?"

"Sure. But be careful. And don't touch that rock in the handle," Jasmin warned. "Or you'll get a burn that hurts more than anything in the entire world."

"Oh." Sundew carefully unsheathed the weapon, inspecting the blade. "What's it made out of?"

"Polished obsidian, with a diamond edge. The rock's a lava rock; they're extremely rare. The handle's made from the oldest and sturdiest oak, steel, rough obsidian, and other hard things. The knife is pretty light, considering all the obsidian it's made of."

"Dragons used *trees* to make a handle in your continent?" Sundew

asked. "Why not make something more...useful?"

"There are trees everywhere on Pyrrhia," Jasmin explained. "I live in a rainforest. It's got thousands of trees and annoying vines. You can barely predict when you'll crash into a tree branch or get caught in vines or get screamed by screaming monkeys."

"Oh. That must be nice." Swordtail heaved out a sigh. "I wish Pantala had more trees."

"We have the Poison Jungle," Sundew offered. "Where there are hundreds of trees and venomous plants."

"I'd like to go there, then. It sounds interesting. Venomous plants? They sound quite carnivorous."

Chapter 37

"Shouldn't Cricket be back now?" Blue asked anxiously.

"It's getting late," Sundew commented. "She needs to get back soon."

"Maybe the HiveWings captured her," Jasmin mused. "Or she's stuck somewhere."

"Then we need to save her!" Blue cried. "We can't let the HiveWings do anything to her!"

Jasmin grabbed his tail as the SilkWing started out of the water tank. "Wait! It won't help the situation if you get caught as well! Perhaps Cricket's alright, and she's just found something interesting. You know how she's like."

"But she's been gone for almost an entire day!" But he sat back down, and sighed. "Maybe you're right. Cricket must have found something useful."

"Like how Wasp can control the HiveWings?" Swordtail thought for a moment. "Maybe she'll give us more information."

"But we need to get going now." Sundew shuffled through her pouches, her talon pausing for a second on one near the top. "The HiveWings are bout to search the place soon when they see the letters."

"I hear wings," Jasmin whispered. "Everyone stay quiet." She made her scales a dark gray, with shadowy black that matched the walls of the water tank. She spread her wings so that they slightly covered Blue, who had the brightest scales.

Someone creaked the trapdoor that led inside open, and a HiveWing with golden-yellow scales and black scales like paint splatters emerged. Jasmin let out a sigh of relief when she saw Cricket's familiar small glasses.

"We need to go," The HiveWing dragonet whispered, holding something tightly to her chest. Jasmin noticed that it was a large, pale egg. "I found out how Queen Wasp controls the HiveWings."

"You did?" Swordtail gasped, then said hurriedly, "Luna's alive. She's landed in the Distant Kingdoms. Now we need to get going."

"Where?" Blue asked.

"Dragonfly Bay will do," Sundew spread her wings and prepared to fly as she squeezed out of the door. "We need to be quick; dragons might spot us."

Jasmin followed after the LeafWing, her heart flaring with hope.

We've found out a way to stop you, Wasp.

And we won't stop till we do.

Chapter 38

"Hey, I think this egg is hatching." Jasmin said.

They were back at the secret cave in Dragonfly Bay, and luckily, no one had seen them. Cricket had explained that Wasp injected some sort of green stuff into each egg, once to control the dragonet's mind, another time to back it up or make it work.

"I still don't think this is the right thing to do," Swordtail was staring at a wall, and Jasmin guessed that he was probably still too shocked and happy about Luna. "What if the dragonet can be mind controlled? Then Wasp will know where we are."

"Oh my goodness, Swordtail, Queen Wasp won't be able to!" Cricket said, exasperated. "I mean, there's a chance it could, but science needs a few risks."

"A few risks that might end our and the entire LeafWing population's lives." Sundew grumbled. "This egg is hatching! It's hatching at the exact wrong timing!"

"No, no, no," Cricket fumbled around the large egg, her talons covering the cracks that were starting to appear on the shell. "Baby dragonet! Stay still! You are not hatching right now! No! Don't you dare!"

"I think it's disagreeing with you," Blue smiled, smothering a laugh. "Look, it's out."

The egg cracked open, and a small HiveWing popped out of its broken shell. She had black scales with fuzzy swathes of bright Kinkajou yellow. Her wings were also striped with black and yellow, and black circles lined her huge golden eyes. The minute-old HiveWing had a round face and was barely bigger than the largest sloth in the rainforest.

"Ew." Jasmin wrinkled her snout at the dragonet. "It's soaked in

green muck."

"Brbble!" The HiveWing dragonet chirped. "Beegooneef! Woodadee!"

Cricket examined the inside of the eggshell, which was coated in slimy green liquid. She sniffed at the ooze. "Sundew, come look at this. Doesn't it smell familiar?"

"It smell like that plant in one of Wasp's greenhouses," Sundew said, surprised. "Does that mean that the plant lets her control the HiveWings?"

"Does she have to eat it to let it work?" Blue asked.

"Maybe. Ooh, I hope it tastes as bad as it smells," Jasmin sniffed at the green slime. "This thing smells badder than a decaying sloth that's been dead for over a month."

"Beeboop!" The baby HiveWing burbled. "Brrrrrbleboof!"

"Don't let that thing get close to me," Sundew hopped out of the way and scooted towards a cave wall.

"I think she's hungry." Cricket smiled. Sundew scowled, then scooped a dead fish out of the pile of food besides her.

"Here, now leave me alone." She threw the fish at the dragonet.

"Gooooooooo," The black-and-yellow HiveWing cooed. "Smeebuf! Snudoo! Brrleee!"

And she threw the fish straight at Jasmin's face.

Chapter 39

Jasmin scowled as she ducked. The half-chewed fish splattered on the cave wall, and she twisted out of the way to avoid the rain of dead fish bits.

"Hey! Baby dragonet! Don't do that!" She shoved Swordtail out of the splatter zone as it fell down with a squelch. "That was a waste of food!"

"Here." Sundew tossed a dried mango at the young HiveWing. "Now stay quiet."

"Oooooh," She looked at the mango with awe, and as she gnawed on it with great concentration, the baby looked at Sundew with a worshipping gaze. "Snudoooo."

"We need to name her," Cricket muffled her burst of laughter. "She looks just like a bumblebee."

"Bumblebee is a good name," Blue offered.

"Bumblebee it is," Jasmin agreed, scowling at the newly named dragonet. "Now, Bumblebee, I have a knife on me right now, and it happens to be able to burn and kill a dragonet as young and fragile as you."

"You have a *knife?"* Cricket gasped. "Why didn't I know that? Jasmin, don't hurt her!"

"I found it while you were gone," The hybrid explained, unsheathing the sturdy weapon from its safe strap on her wing. "It was here all along, and I didn't even know."

"It looks dangerous," The older HiveWing commented. "Don't use it on us, alright?"

"Of course not," Jasmin snorted. "I'm not going to kill a bunch of dragonets that are about to save the world. I'm saving this for Wasp,

you oversized bee."

"Well, it seems that Bumblebee likes you a lot, Sundew," Swordtail interrupted. "Look at her! She's kind of cute, actually."

"Very cute," Blue agreed, just as Bumblebee let out a mournful burble as she noticed that she'd eaten all of her dried mango. The HiveWing tottered over to Sundew, holding out her talons. "Broooolleeep. Snudooooooooooo."

"Glad that's not me," Jasmin laughed, but stiffened as she smelled and saw something unexpected, though far away.

Smoke?

Chapter 40

"Is that smoke?" Jasmin peaked out of the cave entrance, pushing aside vines and seaweed. Outside, a faraway hive was smoldering, its high walls flaring with red and orange fire. "It is smoke. What hive is that?"

Cricket sneaked a look outside, and let out a gasp. "That's Bloodworm Hive! Why is it on fire? I thought that you said the LeafWings won't attack, Sundew!"

"I didn't think they would!" The LeafWing's golden brown eyes were wide with surprise. "I told Belladonna not to attack until we found out about Wasp's mind control!"

"Dragons are dying!" Cricket cried. "Not just HiveWings; they'd get out perfectly fine, but the SilkWings in their Metamorphosis and all the eggs!"

"I know!" Sundew shouted.

"Why'd they do it?" Swordtail asked.

"Maybe they were getting impatient," Jasmin suggested. "LeafWings have spent their entire life planning for this, you know."

"They were." Sundew agreed.

"This is so...mighty. Powerful," Jasmin breathed wonderingly. She saw hundreds of black and yellow dragons zooming out as fast as they could, with a few colorful SilkWings hurrying after them. "Look at the flames. It's chaos out there."

Perhaps Blue had noticed the slightly awed tone of her voice. "Jasmin! There's an *entire hive on fire*, and you'd just stand there admiring the *chaos?!"* He shouted.

"Uh, most likely." Jasmin examined the faraway flames. That was the first time she'd heard the gentle SilkWing shout at anyone. She

quickly changed the subject. "This fire...it's not natural. See the grass nearby? The grass is fine. It's only the hive that's on fire. And there aren't any trees nearby so that the LeafWings could torch the hive. So...I think they're using flamesilk?"

"Flamesilk?" Swordtail cried. "Where in all the hives would they get *flamesilk* from?"

"A dragon with flamesilk," Sundew realized slowly. "Not in Wasp Hive, but from here."

"Not Luna, but..." Horror spread onto Blue's face. "That's my silk doing all that?"

"But how?" Jasmin asked. "They couldn't have stolen silk from Blue. He never produced any they knew of."

"They could." Sundew said flatly.

"What? How?" Cricket teared her gaze away from the burning structure.

"Because I gave it to them."

Chapter 41

"What?!" Swordtail turned to look at the LeafWing.

"Wrrble?" Bumblebee glanced up curiously at the SilkWing. "Beebleburrlb!"

"When? And why?" Cricket's wings drooped as she cast another glimpse at the burning hive.

"When Blue came out of his cocoon, I took some flamesilk, remember?" Sundew shrugged. "There was nothing secretive about it."

"Well, yes, but-" Blue was interrupted by Jasmin, who spoke up loudly from the arguing dragons.

"Look, all the HiveWings are escaping from Bloodworm Hive, and there are a bunch of soldiers and dragons to go settle them and the fire, right? And no one is looking after the greenhouses. We could save the future HiveWing dragonets from Wasp's mind control."

"A hive is burning! It's not a distraction!" Cricket shouted.

"To us, it is," Sundew agreed. "Come on, we have no time to waste."

It seemed to be that there *were* HiveWings guarding the greenhouses with the mind controlling plants.

"What are we going to do?" Blue whispered.

"Kill them?" Jasmin suggested quietly. She saw Cricket open her mouth in protest. "Okay. No."

"I'll take care of it," Sundew whispered. She straightened up and walked right towards the two soldiers.

"L-leafWing!" One stammered. The LeafWing shoved a strange-

looking flower up his snout, and her instantly fell to the ground, asleep. The remaining HiveWing stared at her in terror.

"Queen Wasp is using these plants to control you," Cricket said, coming out of her hiding place. "Go tell the others that she's just bluffing about being able to control you from the start. She can't control any of the queens; she injects this plant into the eggs."

"M-me?" The HiveWing squeaked, looking terrified. She looked around, then flew away as fast as she could.

"Now, who's going to burn the greenhouse down?" Sundew growled.

"Oh- it's me." Blue raised his wrists, his face twisted with guilt. Silk that seemed to be woven flames flowed out of them, each strand pulling hungrily at the plant. Green smoke clouded the air.

"Don't breathe it in," Cricket murmured, holding her breath. Jasmin held her breath, and they all flew away, far from the burning greenhouses.

Chapter 42

"Where do we go now?" Cricket asked as she buzzed through the sky. Bumblebee was wrapped tightly to her chest, and she had clasped her talon over the baby dragonet's snout to stop her from breathing in the smoke.

"The Poison Jungle," Sundew replied.

"The place with loads of venomous plants and dangerous animals?" Jasmin squinted into the distance, seeing the faraway forest of wild green leaves. "Cool."

"There are many dangerous things to avoid," Sundew warned. "And almost everything will eat you, poison you, or kill you."

"Why are we going to this place again?" Swordtail asked wryly.

"Because it's my home," Sundew answered. "And the only place where you'll be safe.

They landed in front of the towering trees that were covered in vine. Jasmin wrinkled her nose at the muddy, rotten smell.

"This place stinks," She commented as they walked into the thick forest. "Kind of reminds of the rainforest. Just more muddy and rotten-smelling."

"The rainforest must be beautiful," Blue breathed.

"I guess." Jasmin peered at the strange-looking plants around them. "There are sloths and toucans and lots of fruits. Fruits are all right, but those toucans can be tough."

"Oh...do they attack dragons?" Cricket asked.

"No. I meant that they're very chewy and there isn't enough meat on them to scrape up a meal," Jasmin grinned at Blue and Swordtail's

expressions. "The trees in the rainforest are a lot...prettier than this place, though. And there's a lot more sun. The screaming monkeys are cool. Did you know that RainWings keep sloths as pets?"

"Really?" Cricket gasped. "Do you have a pet?"

"Used to," Jasmin thought of her sloth, who had silver fur that was as dark as holly bark. She'd named him Crescent, after the curved slash of white on his chest. "He got eaten by a NightWing. On accident. That dragon probably will never forget the scars on his wings. I have another pet, though."

Jasmin had never told anyone about her secret pet, not even Jerboa or Euphoria or anyone else. Not even Queen Glory or Deathbringer.

"What is it?" Blue asked. "A monkey? A bird? Some kind of fish? A rock?"

"Rocks?" Jasmin snorted at the thought. "Who'd have a pet rock?"

But she was amused by his random guesses, nothing close to the animal her 'pet' was.

Because Eclipse was an ocelot.

Chapter 43

Jasmin was around three and a half when she'd found the wounded cat in the rainforest. It was an ocelot, with a unique pelt of silver fur and black markings. The ocelot's eyes were a piercing blue, though then they were clouded with pain.

"Oh, an ocelot," Jasmin walked softly towards the cat. The ocelot was a female. She hissed, though letting out a pitiful whimper as she moved her leg. The leg was completely mauled, and Jasmin could see bone past the rotten flesh and blood.

"Poor thing," The dragonet murmured. She looked at the toucan carcass in her claws; she'd caught it to eat, hoping for another one to come along so she'd be able to have a decent lunch. Jasmin held out the dead bird, and the ocelot looked up warily at her. The lithe cat looked quite exhausted, but her body was curled around three small shapes, tail protectively covering the objects.

"Eat it," Jasmin urged, gently tossing the toucan towards it. The ocelot sniffed at it cautiously, then nibbled on the carcass. It let out a soft moan, and Jasmin finally noticed the scratches on her neck. Blood pooled on the ground as the ocelot jerked and fell silent. The wild cat was dead.

"Oh." Jasmin laid her talons on the body, her claws sticky with blood as she lifted them off. She started when she felt something move against the ocelot's dead body. The hybrid cautiously uncurled the cat's tail and found out that the three shapes were actually little furry kittens.

She was a mother, *Jasmin realized. The baby ocelots were covered in blood, their soft kitten fluff matted to their skin. She felt their heartbeats. They were all dead.*

No, wait. One of the little cats were alive. It wriggled when it felt Jasmin feel its side. She lifted the cat out of the bloody mass, and cast one last look at the dead ocelot family before carrying the young kitten away.

Chapter 44

Jasmin studied the squirming, bloody, little ocelot. She'd decided that a panther or maybe a dragon from the war had attacked the ocelots before the mother had taken them away.

She picked a flower with large, cupped leaves and scooped some water from the nearby stream and washed away the red blood. The baby ocelot had black fur and silver markings. She- Jasmin had guessed that the ocelot was female- was the exact opposite of her mother's colors.

I think this ocelot's only around two months old*, Jasmin mused inside her head.* How lucky. Just barely able to eat meat.

"Come on, baby ocelot," She picked up a small desert rat she'd caught in the desert. "Eat up if you want to survive."

The ocelot let out a growl before gnawing at the dead rat. After it finished its meal, the baby turned to Jasmin. She noticed that her eyes were a sharp, ice-blue that now reminded her of Winter's cold scales. The ocelot purred, and pounced on Jasmin's tail playfully. The dragonet was delighted to see that the small cat liked her so much.

"You need a name," Jasmin said at last. They'd curled up together between some big roots, the baby ocelot cuddled snugly to her side. Jasmin tucked her tail around the fragile cat. "You're as dark as the night, and those silver markings look brighter than the moon. Hm...kind of reminds me of an eclipse. I wish I could see one someday. Well, I guess I'll name you Eclipse. Quite a stealthy name, huh?"

So from then on, they'd always been together, even going on some assassin missions, helping Jasmin finish off her targets. Jasmin had taught Eclipse how to hunt, defend, and attack. Eclipse was a ferocious fighter, and hardly anyone escaped from her claws alive despite her small size, but alone with Jasmin, she was as soft as a dragonet, sleeping unnoticed in her hammock.

"I wish I had a pet scavenger." Cricket's wistful voice broke Jasmin

out of her memories. She missed Eclipse so much. She wondered whether she was alright. What if a NightWing ate the lithe ocelot? Eclipse was only the size of a small dragonet, though still growing at age two, and hunted well enough to grow enough meat for a dragon's meal.

She'll be fine, Jasmin thought. *Eclipse would probably hurt the NightWing more than they hurt her.*

"A monkey used to follow my sister Io everywhere," Swordtail's eyes were far off. "She wanted to keep it as a pet, but mother forced it away. The HiveWings would have probably eaten it; it was for the best."

He was so lost in his thoughts that the SilkWing didn't notice the plant in front of him, its leaves and petals open wide.

"Swordtail, watch ou-" Blue was cut off when Swordtail let out a scream and the flower swallowed him up whole.

Chapter 45

"Oh my goodness," Cricket blinked.

"Swordtail!" Blue yelped.

"Arrgh!!!!" Swordtail's voice echoed from inside. "Let me out, you dumb plant!"

The plant was thrashing violently, the tip of a dark blue and orange tail barely out of its strong jaws.

"Don't move!" Sundew ordered. "And the Venus dragon-trap might think you're a rock and spit you o- okay, now it knows you're prey."

The Venus dragon-trap's ways of hunting reminded Jasmin a lot about Eclipse. It waited patiently for a moment to pounce, and had no hesitations.

It also never let go.

Jasmin stiffened as she smelled fire. She whipped around to find flamesilk pouring out of Blue's wrists, engulfing the dragon-trap and the plants around it in flames.

"Fire in a jungle? This is the worst idea I've ever seen! Even worse than tracking a killer with a group of unexperienced dragonets!" Jasmin shouted. She looked around to find something that would stop the fire growing.

"Eebleboof!" Bumblebee chirruped as Cricket scrambled up a tree to escape the hungry flames. Jasmin's mind went back to the explosion in the history cave.

Where I almost died, She thought. *And Carnelian and Bigtail actually burnt to death.*

Jasmin looked up and saw huge clumps of berries that were a dark red. She picked a few and smashed then in her talons; they were

wet and sticky.

Perfect.

She mashed the berries onto the ground into a thick line. The fire reached out orange arms past the wet barrier, but couldn't get past.

"Here." Sundew was holding a cupped flower, and Jasmin noticed the small pool of water in the center. The LeafWing poured the water over the flames, but that didn't work. She frowned, before closing her eyes, her claws digging deep into the dirt.

"What-" Jasmin began, but stopped when a giant tree started growing from the ground, becoming twice as big as the largest dragon she'd ever seen her entire life, who happened to be Burn. Its leaves smothered the flames and the fire gradually stopped.

"That was a stupid idea!" Sundew snarled. "First rule: no fire in this place."

"I'm so sorry!" Blue cried. He'd finally managed to yank Swordtail out of the Venus dragon-trap, and was rubbing his wrists furiously. "It was a terrible idea, I know. I won't do it ever again."

"Good." Sundew nodded.

"Sundew," Cricket said slowly. Jasmin was still staring at the tree, which was a species that she'd never seen before. "Did you just make a tree grow out of the ground?"

Chapter 46

"...Yes," Sundew looked up at the long branches of the tree. "I have leafspeak; that's a power that some LeafWings have. We can communicate with plants and make them grow faster and bigger. That sort of thing."

"Wow. That must be useful," Jasmin commented.

"That's how you blocked up the exit from the flamesilk cavern!" Cricket gasped. "And how you carried Swordtail all the way to the cave in Dragonfly Bay."

"Oooooh," Bumblebee cooed from her harness. She stretched out her tiny claws and burbled cheerfully towards Sundew's direction. "Eepow!"

"I think that she wants some food," Blue smiled. "Anything that's not poisonous around here?"

"Here. Eat this." Sundew picked a berry from a nearby bush and threw it at Cricket. The HiveWing caught it, and peered at it closely before handing it to Bumblebee.

"Gooble," Bumblebee laughed, stuffing her face, cheeks stained purple. "Prblebeeee."

"Let's go." Sundew shook out her leaf-shaped wings and walked onwards.

"Stop here," Sundew whispered. They'd went deep into the Poison Jungle, and halted when they'd heard voices.

"Who are they?" Jasmin asked. "Other LeafWings?"

"Yup. Everyone, get up this tree. Cricket, you go first."

The HiveWing clambered up the tree, followed closely by Blue.

Swordtail clumsily crawled up the trunk. Jasmin looked back at the direction of the noise before letting the dark green and browns of the jungle wash over her and silently went over to Sundew.

Three LeafWings were there, behind the bushes. Two of them were looking disapprovingly at the other, who was chasing a panther.

Actually, it was more like the panther was chasing the scrawny dragonet that looked no older than Jasmin. He was throwing seeds at the hungry-looking panther while his eyes were tightly shut.

"Who are they?" She repeated softly. Sundew jumped slightly, the golden scales scattered on her body glimmering as they caught in the light.

"That's Nettle and Wolfsbane," The LeafWing murmured, pointing to the two grumpy dragons. "And that one who's being chased down by the panther is Mandrake."

"They look pretty unexperienced," Jasmin noticed. "The third especially. He looks pathetic."

"Compared to you, they are." Sundew's mouth twitched upwards ever so slightly. "And Mandrake...yes. He is pathetic. But Nettle and Wolfsbane have trained in the jungle for a long time to survive."

Chapter 47

"Go away!" Mandrake yelped as the panther lunged at his tail. He shut his eyes even tighter and slowed down, taking a deep breath.

"What in all of Pyrrhia is he doing?" Jasmin snapped. "Never shut your eyes when being chased down by a hungry carnivore! That idiot!"

"I know." Sundew closed her eyes, and a second later, a huge thorn bush erupted out of the ground under the panther. Huge thorns pierced the panther's skin, and it let out a howl of pain.

"Did...did I just do that?" Mandrake opened one eye.

"Son! You did it!" Wolfsbane, the oldest out of the three, let out a cheer.

"I don't believe it." Nettle blinked. "It has to be Sundew. Sundew! I know you're here."

Sundew remained silent, which Jasmin knew was a good choice. Unfortunately, Bumblebee wasn't as wise.

"SNUDOOOOOOO!!!!!" The baby HiveWing's loud wail pierced Jasmin's ears. She winced inwardly. "EEEEEEPOWWW!"

"Alright! Sundew! Come out this instant!" Nettle snapped. Sundew sighed before emerging from behind the bushes. Jasmin heard her call, "Come on, Swordtail, Blue. Get out of that tree."

The two SilkWings scrambled down the tree, their wings spread and catching light. The three LeafWings stared at Blue, sucking in a breath. Jasmin guessed that they'd never seen such a bright color in their damp, muddy jungle.

"Cricket. You can come out now," Sundew turned to the bushes where Jasmin was hiding. "And you too, Jasmin."

Jasmin watched Cricket clamber down awkwardly, Bumblebee cheerfully wriggling in her harness.

"You brought HiveWings into the jungle?" Nettle shrieked. "Belladonna will hear about this! Just because you're her daughter doesn't mean that you can do whatever you want, least of all bringing Wasp into our home!"

"They can't be controlled, you frog-face," Sundew snapped with impatience. "And Jasmin, just come out now."

Jasmin slipped silently out of the bushes, careful not to brush against the spiky seeds that clung onto the leaves. Wolfsbane let out a stifled gasp when he saw her wings and color.

"She- her wings-" He stammered. "She's not a SilkWings?"

"Yes," Sundew sighed. "Wolfsbane, Mandrake, Nettle, these are my friends. They need a safe place, so I brought them here, away from the HiveWings."

Chapter 48

Jasmin, Swordtail, Blue, and Cricket followed Sundew as she led the way to their camp. Mandrake walked besides Sundew, glancing back nervously at Cricket and Bumblebee, and then flicking his eyes to Jasmin's wings.

"You can ask whatever question's on your mind, you know," Jasmin said pointedly. "No need to stare."

"Alright. Sorry." The LeafWing ducked his head quickly. "You're not a SilkWing, right?"

"You can clearly see that from my wings and expression," Jasmin pointed out drily. "Also, I'm pretty sure SilkWings don't have a venomous tail-barb, either."

"We don't have assassins, too," Blue said tentatively. "And we have antennae."

"Hey, I've always been wondering," Swordtail glanced at Jasmin. "I've noticed you've got these two fangs. Do they inject poison or anything?"

"Oh, wouldn't that be interesting?" Cricket was whispering, since Bumblebee was finally asleep. "You'd be like a HiveWing, only no black and more color."

"Um, they don't do anything like that," Jasmin muttered. She touched the two sharp teeth with her tongue, remembering Scarlet's disfigured face as she was pulled out of the arena. "Nothing interesting."

"Okay. You're an assassin?" Mandrake asked.

"Why not move on to you," Jasmin cleared her throat. "Why are you trying to catch that panther by throwing seeds at it? That's a bit stupid."

"Well. I supposedly have the second strongest leafspeak in the tribe. Sundew's first, of course." Mandrake let out a sigh. "Though it doesn't seem like it."

"Are you the only nice LeafWing in the Poison Jungle?" Cricket asked jokingly.

"Pretty much." He shrugged.

"Are you friends with Sundew?" Blue glanced at Sundew, and Jasmin noticed the tension in her stiffening face.

"Let's not-" Sundew began, but Bumblebee let out a loud shriek that drowned out her words.

"You could say that," Jasmin noticed his crooked smile. "Though not exactly. Oh, for all the trees, I forgot to introduce myself and my sister and father. Nettle's my bigger sister, and Wolfsbane is my father. And I'm Mandrake, as you know pretty well, and I'm Sundew's fiancee."

Chapter 49

"Mandrake, what the heck?!" Sundew flared her wings, clashing into the trees in anger and frustration. "We agreed to not call it that!"

"But 'future husband' sounds weird," Mandrake pointed out. "So I chose 'fiancee'."

"Oh my goodness." Cricket blinked.

"Uh...should I be in this jungle right now or should I leave?" Jasmin shoved Blue out of her way as he stumbled back from Sundew's flailing arms. "Don't come any closer than this!" She pushed him towards Cricket.

"Sorry!" He squeaked.

"Are you and Sundew..." Swordtail trailed off.

"No!" Sundew shouted, the same time as Mandrake yelped, "No! Nothing like that."

"Oh." Cricket winced as Bumblebee fidgeted in her harness, and the HiveWing gently set the baby on the ground. Bumblebee immediately scrambled up Sundew and settled herself around her neck.

"Well, Sundew and I have the strongest leafspeak in the tribe," Mandrake explained quickly. "Just like how Belladonna and Hemlock were the strongest in their generation. So the LeafWings want a dragon with abilities that make them capable of destroying the HiveWings."

"Something like that! None of the weird stuff you're thinking about!" Sundew yelled at Cricket.

"Oh. But I though-"

"Nothing at all." Sundew repeated firmly, and the jungle fell into an

awkward silence. Jasmin took the chance to look around her. The amount of dangerous plants had lessened, she realized. A black panther was watching them from the shadows, looking very much like the one Sundew had taken down.

It also reminded her of Eclipse, except a lot larger than her own dangerous ocelot.

"There's danger everywhere in the Poison Jungle," Mandrake said, noticing her gaze. "Um. If that was what you were wondering about."

"Not really, but good information for me." Jasmin watched as the panther disappeared into the undergrowths, tracking what she thought was a bird. "Just thinking of home. The rainforest."

"A rainforest? What's that?"

"Oh, I guess you wouldn't know. In Pyrrhia, we've got trees everywhere until you get sick of looking at them. It's similar to the Poison Jungle. Just...more sunshine-y and less muddy. Way happier there, too. But a lot more lazy dragons and sneaky jerks that'll lunge when you least expect it."

"I wish I could go to Pyrrhia one day," Cricket's eyes were misty and unfocused. "There'd be huts! Trees! No mind controlling queens!"

"We've got a mad ex-queen on the loose and wants revenge on the RainWings for disfiguring her face," Jasmin offered. "And a school with exploding Dragonflame Cactus."

"Alright. You win," Swordtail sighed. "Your continent has way more danger and thrill than us."

Chapter 50

Jasmin inspected the jungle closely, noticing the dew-covered leaves and the occasional chitter of a bird, high above the reach of most predators.

Eclipse would have been able to catch that bird, Jasmin thought ruefully. *She's built for this place.*

"Eclipse would love this place." She murmured to herself.

"What?" Cricket turned to look at Jasmin. "Who's Eclipse?"

"Just someone in the rainforest," Jasmin said dismissively. "She'd love it here."

"Oh. What tribe is she from?" The HiveWing asked. Bumblebee let out a shrill squeak, pointing enthusiastically at the bird from her perch on Sundew's shoulders. The bird shrieked back.

"Tribe?" The hybrid grinned. "Oh, you don't need to know."

"Eclipse must be very important to you," Cricket glanced at Blue, who was stumbling on a tree root. "Does she like you, too?"

"I have no idea." Jasmin shrugged. "Eclipse doesn't speak Dragon. More like she doesn't speak at all."

"I've heard of some dragons that can't speak," Cricket said thoughtfully. "Ooh, I think they're called mute."

"Hm?" Jasmin realized that Cricket thought that the ocelot was a dragon. "Oh. Hey, you want to know a surprising fact?"

"What is it?"

"Eclipse isn't a dragon. She's my pet. Sort of."

"Oh!" The HiveWing smiled at the thought of the lithe species. She

let out a little laugh, pushing her glasses up. "And I thought you were talking about a dragon you love."

"Ha!" Jasmin snorted at the thought. "As if! I prefer being alone, actually."

"We're here!" Sundew called. Jasmin finally noticed the barrier of vines. They gathered around an area that was wet and clear of any plants.

"Cover your eyes," The LeafWing called. She placed a talon over Bumblebee's eyes and closed her own. Jasmin stood perplexed.

"Why- ARRGHHH!" Swordtail was cut off as a heavy shower of water poured down on them. Jasmin quickly shut her eyes, letting the rain soak her wings. She shook them out to dry them.

"See these seeds?" Sundew nodded to the spiky balls that swirled away from the water. "I keep telling them to stay out of the way, but they never listen to me."

"But they can't just walk out of the way, right?" Jasmin said pointedly. "It's not like they can stay out. Seeds don't have legs, you know."

"Good point." Mandrake smiled, and led the way inside. "Come on. It's time for you to meet the LeafWings."

Chapter 51

"Sundew?" A LeafWing with golden scales scattered on her forest-green body looked up from a conversation. Her mouth curled up to form a snarl. "And you brought two HiveWings into the jungle! What were you thinking?"

"And what about you?" Sundew snapped. "You said that you wouldn't attack the HiveWings until I gave you information."

"Oh, but we all know that it won't happen." The LeafWing's face was sour.

"We found out how Wasp is controlling the HiveWings. We have the evidence." Jasmin could see the anger boiling in Sundew's head. She dug through her leaf pouches to take out the piece of the plant they'd gotten. "Do you know this?"

"No." The LeafWing said flatly, but Jasmin could see that she was lying.

"She's lying," The hybrid whispered to Sundew. "She knows what it is. But don't question it, or we might not get answers."

Sundew nodded. A LeafWing who had brown wings and dark green scales suddenly let out a gasp.

"What is that?" He pointed at Jasmin. The other LeafWings peered at her, whispering and muttering to each other.

"'That' happens to be a dangerous assassin that could break your little necks in a heartbeat," She felt the knife's weight hanging on her neck, tied on with a sturdy yet thin vine. The sheath was disguised with various black flowers that she'd found, looking very much unlike a knife sheath. "So watch out."

"Two wings," A LeafWing with pink streaks murmured. "But they aren't like ours. And there's no black on her scales."

"Definitely not a SilkWing," Another added. "A SilkWing's colors are way different. They also have antennae and don't really look...too..."

"Dangerously annoyed?" Jasmin suggested, her ruff flared out and streaked with volcanic colors. Swordtail snorted. "Look, let's stop ogling at me like a dragonet and start working."

"We need to stay here for a bit," Sundew explained. "This place is the only place we can be safe."

"Brilliant idea, Sundew." The first LeafWing smiled, but Jasmin noticed the clever glint in her eyes. "Luring the enemy into LeafWing territory, and guarding them is a great plan."

"What?" Cricket cried.

"But- why?" Blue asked pitifully. Jasmin could see her own rage reflected in Sundew's eyes.

"That's not what I said!" The LeafWing dragonet roared. "And you know it, Belladonna."

"Take them away." Belladonna waved her talon at them dismissively. "And prepare for the feast."

A LeafWing reached out to grab Jasmin, but she snarled, flicking her tail-barb close to his heart.

"Touch me, and you die."

Chapter 52

Cricket, Swordtail, and Blue followed Sundew to a place with nests woven with twigs and leaves, decorated with different patterns and flowers. Jasmin shot one last venomous look at the LeafWing who'd tried to grab her before following them.

"Bryony and Pokeweed aren't here," Sundew explained. "Swordtail, Blue, you can take Pokeweed's nest. Cricket, Jasmin, and Bumblebee can take Bryony's."

"Um, I shouldn't really be with day-old dragonet?" Jasmin said. "Poisonous tail-barb? Extremely deadly claustrophobia? A knife that can give you third-degree burns?"

"We can change it around a bit," Blue offered. "I can go with Cricket. You can stay with Swordtail."

Jasmin wrinkled her snout. "I guess that's fine. I'm feeling a bit tired; I'll sleep for a bit. Maybe Qibli will talk to me again."

"Tell me if he tells you more about Luna," Swordtail put in quickly.

"So no pressure." Jasmin snorted. She climbed into the nest, taking up as little space as possible. Swordtail clambered inside, his legs smacking her side.

"Watch it," She growled, shifting around to get comfortable. Jasmin curled her tail inward, making sure that the tip was securely looped away from the SilkWing. She closed her eyes, feeling uncomfortable as Swordtail's wings landed on her. Sleep immediately overcame her, and she was soon sound asleep.

A growl startled her. Jasmin was back in the rainforest, and something had pounced on her tail.

"Who's there?" She whipped around, only to find a lithe ocelot with

black fur and silver patterns.

"Eclipse!" Jasmin cried. Eclipse barreled into her, pushing her head into her chest. Jasmin gently stroked the young ocelot's silky fur as Eclipse purred contently. She closed her eyes, feeling relaxed for the first time in months.

Something sticky and wet washed over her talons. Jasmin opened her eyes, and was horrified to see Eclipse's blood pooling in her talons. Her body laid in an awkward position, an infected wound festering her neck. A NightWing was standing over the ocelot, her blood smeared on his mouth.

It was Deathbringer.

Chapter 53

"Delicious," Deathbringer sang, his cold voice nothing like his actual bright, friendly tone. Jasmin clenched her talons, but when she pierced the NightWing with her tail-barb, it only clashed against his midnight black scales like a sword against armor.

"Just what I need." He devoured Eclipse's bleeding corpse. "A light snack before the torture begins."

"What did you do?" Jasmin brushed away angry tears and leaped at him again. Deathbringer batted her away with a talon.

"Do you remember this dragon?" He hissed. "Come out, you pathetic excuse for a dragon!"

A SandWing stumbled into view, his sides heaving with effort. Jasmin's stomach twisted. She knew this dragon. He had familiar light-freckled wings, but his pitch-black eyes were empty and hollow, nothing like the friendly and warm eyes she remembered.

"Jas...min..." Coyote gasped. "...Help...me."

"Coyote!" Jasmin rushed forward, but Deathbringer blocked her way. He raised a talon and raked his claws over the SandWing's snout. Coyote let out a yelp of pain, cringing back.

"You can't do this!" Jasmin snarled.

"Just watch me," Deathbringer smirked, and slammed his tail down hard on Coyote's back. Jasmin's father collapsed, and let out a shriek of agony as the NightWing breathed hot fire on his sensitive tail. Jasmin tried again and again to hurt Deathbringer, kill him, torture him, but he blocked all her rage-filled attempts.

"See him squirm!" Deathbringer crowed. "See him writhe, begging for mercy!"

"You will not harm Coyote anymore!" Jasmin growled. She snapped

open her jaws, and shot her venom straight at him. But the NightWing swiftly moved out of the way at the last moment, and Jasmin watched as the acidic black liquid fall in slow motion, splashing right on Coyote's eyes.

The SandWing let out a strangled scream of pain as the venom dug its way into his scales, melting and bellowing smoke with a horrifying hissing sound.

"No!" Jasmin croaked. She fell down besides his bloody, beaten body. She looked down at Coyote's pained form, watching wretchedly as he twitched and screamed and finally fell silent.

She'd killed him. She'd killed her own father. The dragon she loved, who she'd so desperately wished wasn't dead.

"See?" Deathbringer cackled. "You're helpless against death. You watched your pet, your father die in my claws, and soon all your friends will meet the same unfortunate end...your poor mother will be devastated. And I'll save her for last, and make you watch as I rip every last tooth and scale off her bloody body until she's begging for mercy.

"And you won't be able to do anything about it."

Chapter 54

"Jasmin? Are you okay?" Jasmin stared at her own talons, stained red with Eclipse and Coyote's blood. She barely heard the faint, familiar voice coming closer. "Jasmin!"

Jasmin turned around. There, standing tall and straight as always, with his glinting ice-blue scales, was the dragon she'd never expected to see again for the rest of her life.

Winter.

"Winter?" Jasmin trembled. "Look what I've done. I've killed my own father. I've watched someone eat my own pet."

"No, you didn't," Winter looked down at the bloody, bruised, misshapen body of her father. "This is a dream. None of this is real."

"But it is!" Jasmin buried her head into her talons. "How can this be fake?"

"This is a dream," Winter repeated. "You didn't kill this SandWing. I know you, and you'd never do that."

"Even when I almost hit you with my venom?" Jasmin looked up straight into his dark blue eyes.

"Yeah." Winter said sheepishly. "I guess I wasn't thinking very clearly when I said...you know. We're waiting for you back in Pyrrhia. Qibli forgot to mention something."

"Spit it out," Jasmin leaned in. She wiped off the dream-blood off her talons, pushing away Coyote's dead body. "I want to know."

"Turtle and Tsunami swam to the Lost Continent," Winter frowned. "They've arrived, but we've had no word from them after they told us where they were."

"Where are they?" Jasmin snapped to attention. "They may be close

to where we are right now."

"Um..." Winter thought for a moment. "I think Tsunami said it was the...something forest? A rainforest?"

Jasmin stiffened. "The Poison Jungle?"

"Yes!" Winter cried. "You know where that is?"

"Of course! How could I not?" Jasmin stood up. "I'm there right now!"

"Really?" Winter jumped up, his eyes bright with excitement. "Tsunami said that they were with a tribe called the LeafWings. Do you know them?"

"LeafWings?" Jasmin frowned. "I'm here with them right now. But I didn't see any SeaWings."

"Are you certain?" He asked.

"Yeah. Positive." Jasmin hesitated as Winter began fading away.

"I think I'm waking up," She said at last. "But I'll let you know. Dreamvisit again, alright?"

"Sure." Winter called. "Be prepared for a lot of smiling and shining rainbows."

"Kinkajou." Jasmin laughed as she thought of the bright RainWings dragonet. "I'll be ready."

Chapter 55

"Jasmin! Are you alright?" Swordtail's voice snapped Jasmin out of sleep.

"Yeah." She shuddered as she remembered her nightmare before Winter had interrupted her. She held on to the thought that the NightWings had killed Coyote, not her.

And Eclipse was alright. Of course she was. The young ocelot was probably having the time of her life, chasing butterflies and catching monkeys.

"You were saying some pretty harsh words in your sleep." Swordtail lightened up. "Did Qibli visit you again?"

"I had a nightmare." Jasmin rubbed her head, feeling a throbbing headache. "But on the bright side, my friend Winter visited me."

"The dragon you tried to kill?" The SilkWing guessed.

"Bingo." Jasmin stood up, shaking away the dizzy sensation. "He told me Turtle and Tsunami are here in the Poison Jungle, with the LeafWings. But I don't see them anywhere."

"Really?" Swordtail frowned. He went to Blue and Cricket, poking the flamesilk awake. "Hey. Hey. Hey! Jasmin has news."

"What is it?" Cricket blinked sleepily, and stepped carefully out of the nest, careful not to disturb Bumblebee. Sundew was nowhere to be seen, and Jasmin guessed that she had went out or joined Belladonna's discussion.

"My friend and his sister's in the Poison Jungle," She explained. "And Winter told me that they're with the LeafWings."

"I didn't see any dragons from the Distant Kingdoms in here." Blue looked around, as if in the few hours the dragons in the area had changed.

"They'll stick out a bit," Jasmin said. "Unless there are any LeafWings that are dark blue. Actually, we might not have noticed Turtle in here. He's dark green, you see. But he's got some glow-in-the-dark scales. So...I guess I'll go take a look around this place?"

"How?" Cricket asked. "These LeafWings will never let us poke around their jungle."

"I've got some camouflage scales, remember?" Jasmin grinned, and let the waves of dark green, brown, and red cover her normal colorful scales. "Bye. Have fun."

She silently slipped out of the area, and found a place in the wall of woven plants that was slightly loose. Jasmin pushed away the fronds and sneaked out of the camp.

I'm out.

Chapter 56

Jasmin shook out her wings, relieved to be out of the tight area, and when she'd walked farther away from the LeafWings base, Jasmin let her real colors shimmer back into view.

"If I were a battle-hungry SeaWing with a less-athletic companion, where would I be?" She muttered. Turtle and Tsunami had swam here, so they must be near a river that led to the ocean. Jasmin went deeper into the jungle, careful to avoid contact with any plant.

I've got to find some mud, She thought. Or something similar. *The ground should be wet, anyways.*

Jasmin let out a yelp as she felt something slimy wrap around her leg. She lifted her left leg to find a tentacle-like tendril sneaking up her body. Jasmin peeled it off, wincing as she felt thorn-sharp hairs unstick from her leg.

Wait a second. Slimy?

That plant...if I'm right, there should be some mud and a trickle of water...Aha!

Jasmin found cold water seeping through the wet ground. She ventured deeper into the strange area to find-

A river!

"What in all of Pyrrhia?" Jasmin peered closer at the ground near the brown river. There were marks in the soft dirt, as if something as large as a dragonet had been dragged out by another. There were footsteps nearby, too, made by a dragon. Jasmin squinted at the ground. Two dragons had followed the mysterious dragon.

Two dragons with webbed talons.

I've found them!

She followed the tracks into a part of a jungle she'd never seen before. The tracks ended there, as the dragons had stepped out of the mud and onto the squelchy grass.

But the grass here is crushed by the weight of three dragons stepping on it. Good. There's still a track I can follow. If the tracks stop again, I can find signs of dragons here by broken branches, a scale or two, and maybe mud left on their talons.

Jasmin followed the flattened grass, and when the ground fell into soft dirt, she followed the skid marks and unnaturally lifted roots that Jasmin guessed Turtle had tripped over.

Turtle...I'll finally be able to see one of the dragons in my winglet again!

Perhaps this time I can have a new start.

One that doesn't involve them hating me for my survival.

Chapter 57

Jasmin proceeded her hunt for Turtle and their ferocious head of school, Tsunami. It was quite easy tracking them down, because there were lots of skid marks and kicked-up dirt. She guessed that this was all Turtle's work.

Again, Jasmin wondered who the other dragon who'd led them through the jungle were. A LeafWing? Or a runaway SilkWing?

Maybe even a HiveWing.

She had a horrible thought; what if Turtle and Tsunami had been captured by the HiveWings, and were led away to their hidden base in the jungle?

HiveWings probably don't live in a place with trees their queen forced them to cut down, Jasmin reassured herself. *And the LeafWings would have found out by now.*

She let the jungle colors wash over her galaxy scales as she heard voices. The hybrid untied her knife from her neck, then pushed it under her arm, a trick she'd learned when she had to hide her weapons. No one could see it there when she camouflaged.

Jasmin quickened her pace, eager to find the SeaWings. She was disappointed to find a clearing with no dangerous plants of any sort. Jasmin frowned. She was certain she'd heard voices.

"...patients." A voice sounded from above.

"Really?" The surprised voice followed closely. Jasmin looked up, and saw hundreds of treehouses, much like the ones in the rainforest, built on the sturdy trees.

"Woah," She breathed. LeafWings were flying above, resting in treehouses, and playing together. They were so happy, unlike Belladonna's strict and frightened soldiers.

More LeafWings in the Poison Jungle?

Jasmin flew up, beating her invisible wings lightly. She glided through the trees, glancing inside each treehouse in turn. As she passed by a couple of LeafWings, they whipped around with surprise.

"Willow, is it just me, or did I feel something fly right by me?" A LeafWing with light green scales asked a smaller, younger looking dragonet.

"Probably just the wind." The other LeafWing, the younger one with darker green scales, reassured. Jasmin sneaked a look past their wings, and faltered when she saw familiar dark green-and-gold scales.

What is Sundew *doing here?*

Chapter 58

Jasmin hesitated before landing swiftly on a branch just below the treehouse. She grabbed a tree knot, and silently scaled her way up. The knife went loose a couple of times before Jasmin gave up and retied it onto her neck.

No one will see it anyways, She thought. *Everyone's too busy to look at a tree.*

Jasmin lifted herself onto the branch closest to the woven floor. The two LeafWings had went inside the house, and she could hear voices.

"The Distant Kingdoms?" Sundew was saying, sounding surprised. Jasmin angled her wings and leaped onto the balcony. She gripped onto the vines, and carefully peeked inside, her knife back in its original spot under the inside of her wing.

"They're sleeping right now, as you can see, but look at their scales!" The LeafWing called Willow, the one who'd been talking to the older LeafWing let out a breath. "And their wings! I've never seen anyone with wings like these!"

"Uh. I have." Sundew said. Jasmin walked into the treehouse, careful not the make a noise. "I was traveling with some dragons, remember? And one of them are from the Distant Kingdoms."

"What?!" Willow blinked. Jasmin sneaked closer to Sundew, inching past the other LeafWings. She craned her neck to see what they were all looking at, and sucked in a quiet gasp.

The familiar green and blue scales and the dimly glowing patterns belonged to Turtle and Tsunami.

"I thought I heard something." Sundew whipped around, glaring at were Jasmin was.

"Sundew. It's me," She breathed. "Don't mind. These are my friends."

"Jasmin?" Sundew's voice was louder than Jasmin would have liked. "You're here?"

Jasmin sighed. "You really aren't familiar to the skill of staying quiet?"

"Who cares. They probably know now anyways." Sundew nodded to the two flabbergasted LeafWings, who were looking at her like she was crazy.

"Which is because you've literally just *talked to the air like it's the most normal thing in the entire world!"* Jasmin hissed, but changed back to her purple, turquoise, and navy scales, retying the knife back on her neck. "Yes. Hi. I'm the bit of air."

Chapter 59

"Oh wow," Willow whispered. "A dragon who's from the Distant Kingdoms! One that's awake!"

"Who are you?" The other dragonet was warier than her awed companion.

"I'm Jasmin. Who are you?" Jasmin retied- *again,* and she was getting a bit sick of it by now- the knife back on her neck.

"I'm Willow." The dark green LeafWing smiled. "Nice to meet you, Jasmin."

"And I'm Hazel," The pale green dragonet's voice was ridiculously regal. "First in line to the LeafWings throne, and Queen Sequoia's granddaughter."

"Queen?" Jasmin turned to Sundew. "I thought she was dead."

"Well, she's alive." She shrugged. "Do you know these dragons, Jasmin?"

"Actually, yeah. I was just telling the others about a dream I had." Jasmin told Sundew about her encounter with Winter, though skipping over what happened before.

"Really?" Hazel gasped, all seriousness gone. "So you know these dragons! Wow! And look at your tail! Kind of reminds me of a scorpion. Hey, how did you turn invisible?"

"Um. Hello?" Jasmin looked at where Tsunami and Turtle had been sleeping just a moment ago. Now Turtle was awake, looking as confused and sleepy as she remembered him.

"Turtle!" She laughed. "Hey! Did you miss me?"

"Huh?" Turtle blinked, rubbing his eyes. "Jasmin? I must be dreaming."

"No, I'm literally *standing in front of you*, squid-face." Jasmin poked him.

"Hey!" Turtle sat up. "You *are* real! Jasmin! Don't ever run off again!"

"I won't. But we're stuck here until we get out of here." Jasmin looked down at Tsunami, who was beginning to wake up.

"Hi, Tsunami!" She said brightly to the SeaWing. "Is everything alright in Jade Mountain?"

"Jasmin?" Tsunami squinted at her. "You're here! I am SO ANGRY AT YOU! Do NOT run off with a winglet of dragonets, and NEVER ABANDON THEM AND END UP IN THIS OTHER CONTINENT!"

"I won't." Jasmin grinned. "Don't worry. Though I'll need to do that again to get back to Pyrrhia."

Tsunami sighed.

"Alright. You win."

Chapter 60

"Cool knife." Turtle sighed. "I wish I had something to protect myself with."

"Aren't you an ani- Oh, right. Qibli told me about your situation." Jasmin touched the knife hanging from her neck.

"You've got a KNIFE?" Tsunami and Hazel cried at the same time, though Hazel seemed more excited than the furious SeaWing.

"Can I see it?" Willow asked.

"What does it do?" Willow looked at her.

"It gives you third-degree burns. So unless you want to live the rest of your lives without any scars, don't even graze a scale on it. For your safety."

"Oh." Willow brushed her claws over the blade. "Why do you have a knife? Do you run into a lot of danger?"

"She's an assassin." Sundew explained bluntly, and Jasmin could see something flashing in her eyes.

"Assassin? What is an assassin doing in our jungle?" Hazel bristled. "With a knife that looks like it's going to kill us all?"

"It won't," Jasmin interjected. "At least, I won't. Though I don't know if I'll ignore a weapon if I'm in danger."

"Hm. Alright." Hazel muttered. Jasmin looked out; how long had she been here for?

"I'd better get back," She called. "Maybe I'll come see you again, Turtle."

"You should stay here," Tsunami argued. "It's getting late."

"She's got a point," Willow agreed. "You'll be safer if you aren't wandering through the jungle at night."

"I didn't notice I'd spent an entire day finding you." Jasmin frowned. "I think I really should get back."

"Oh, no you won't." A huge, forest-green LeafWing walked into the room. Her body was criss-crossed with old battle scars. "You've entered my area of the jungle without permission. So you're staying here."

"Who are you to order me around, though?" Jasmin snapped. Hazel and Willow both gasped. Sundew turned to the hybrid.

"Jasmin," She said slowly. "Meet Queen Sequoia, queen of the LeafWings."

"And she's the LeafWing queen all the way from the beginning of the Tree Wars."

Chapter 61

"Queen?" Jasmin turned to Sundew, and looked back at the battle-scarred LeafWing. "I thought you said she was dead. And I also thought that Belladonna was the leader of the tribe."

"Belladonna?" Sequoia scoffed. "The leader of the PoisonWings, yes, but not queen of the LeafWings."

"We do call you SapWings, you know," Sundew pointed out.

"I don't care what any of you say, but I should get back," Jasmin said. "I told Cricket, Blue, and Swordtail I'd be back soon."

"You should wait until tomorrow to travel back to the PoisonWing camp," Hazel frowned. "It's dangerous in the Poison Jungle."

"I'll be fine," Jasmin waved away her concern. "I want to investigate this place a bit. And the outer border sounds interesting."

"The outer border is not safe," Sundew growled. "HiveWings are probably patrolling there."

"I said I'll be fine!" Jasmin turned away, getting impatient. "Come on, you know me. I won't get caught." She went outside and flew off the woven floor.

"If you get killed, I'll never forgive myself," Sequoia's fading voice followed her into the jungle. Jasmin flew above the treetops, and landed on the branches. The setting sun was glowing brightly, and she glided just above the leafy branches and near the edge of the jungle, where the thick trees thinned out.

"HiveWings," She breathed. Dragons with black and red, golden, or yellow scales were flying busily about, their four wings a blur in the air. Most were quite far away, but some of the dragons were close enough for Jasmin to see their black-speckled patterns.

Curious, the hybrid crept closer.

"The Queen said that she'd seen those pesky dragonets flying this way." A faraway voice met her ears. Jasmin stiffened, and landed on the ground, carefully watching behind some bushes. "We better find them. She'll kill us if we don't find them."

"The flamesilk would be easy to find," A HiveWing with yellow scales and black wings growled. "Except this moon-cursed jungle is filled with dragon-eating plants."

"**Be quiet.**" The bone-chilling voice made Jasmin shiver. The patrol of HiveWings had no more than five dragons, but all of them had white eyes. "**I see something moving.**"

Jasmin looked at the direction the five HiveWings had turned to. A LeafWing was trembling behind a tree, but her leaf-shaped wings were out in the open. She looked no older than Jasmin, but scrawnier.

Jasmin looked on, horrified, as the HiveWings drew closer to the now squeaking dragonet. She didn't want to get caught, but that LeafWing looked so...scared.

"Hey! Over here, you bug-brains!" She shouted, leaping out of the bushes. "Here! Mindless HiveWings!"

All five of them snapped their heads towards her.

"**Capture the dragonet.**" They echoed. "**Bring her back alive.**"

And the battle began.

Chapter 62

"Get out of here!" Jasmin yelled at the frightened LeafWing. "Run as fast you can to your camp!"

The dragonet took an uncertain step forward.

"Go!" Jasmin plunged her tail-barb into the heart of one of the HiveWings, who had lunged for the LeafWing. "Don't make things harder for me!"

The LeafWing dragonet finally broke into a run, and vanished into the shadows. The HiveWing let out a scream of agony before falling onto the ground, blood spilling out of his mouth.

"**A SilkWing...**" One of the HiveWing hissed. "**No.**" He corrected himself. "**A dragonet from none of the tribes...how peculiar.**"

Jasmin slammed his head to the ground, and snapped his neck with a strong jerk. "Had enough?" She turned to the remaining three HiveWings, who were bleeding from a few scratches. "I know you're in there, Wasp."

"**Follow the LeafWing.**" They headed where the dragonet had run. Jasmin intercepted them and threw one down to the ground. She stomped on the HiveWing's leg, and felt something crunch. She let out a shriek, and her eyes flickered to a hazel brown. Jasmin drew her knife and plunged it into her chest. She felt warm blood lick her scales before knocking the other two to the ground.

"**More HiveWings are coming,**" They cackled. "**And you'll die. Now follow the LeafWing.**"

The only way to protect the LeafWing dragonet is to get captured, Jasmin realized with a jolt. *I need let them win. It's the only way.*

Jasmin let the two HiveWings grab her by the arms, but she held onto her knife. She didn't want to lose it, after all. One of the

HiveWings lashed her talon past her leg, and Jasmin winced as she felt blood gush out of the wound. The other slammed her head to the ground, and she felt her jaw hit the earth with a thud.

"Take me," Jasmin growled. "I'll get out sooner than you'll expect."

"**You can try.**" Wasp laughed with cruel amusement. "**But you'll need to get past the torture first.**"

Chapter 63

Jasmin could not believe it.

She was imprisoned.

By some dumb HiveWings.

To save a LeafWing she didn't know anything about.

This was one of her most stupid plans yet. She was currently chained to a wall in a cage with thick metal bars.

I can't believe myself, Jasmin thought angrily for the tenth time in the last hour. *Deathbringer would be disappointed. I've just landed myself in a cage by two mind-controlled dragons. Just two! What was I even thinking?*

Not that she really cared about what Deathbringer would say about. But she could still imagine what he'd say.

Not like you to be stuck in a small prison for an hour, He'd smirk. *I expected more from a dragon I'd trained myself.*

"Shut up." Jasmin muttered. *I must be crazy, talking to a dragon I hate, who's also, by the way, a whole continent away from me.*

"I see you're still here." She looked up to find a HiveWing with shiny yellow scales and straight, pure black stripes.

Like a wasp, Jasmin realized. *This is Wasp's actual self. If I kill her right now, everyone will be safe.*

"You won't be able to kill me." Wasp laughed as if she could read her mind. "Because you don't have your precious knife with you, and I put metal around that tail of yours.

I still have my venom, Jasmin thought. *But even if I shoot her, I won't be able to get out of these chains. And they'd chain my mouth shut, too.*

"I can fight with my claws," She snarled instead. "I can snap your neck in a second."

"You can't," Wasp said gleefully. "Because you're chained to the wall. I bet those arms are feeling awfully numb by now."

That was horribly true. While her tail was in a metal device that made it harmless, her arms were hung to the wall in a way that made Jasmin droop to the ground. Her wings were, thankfully, untouched.

"Oh, who's knife was this?" Wasp reached inside a pouch to reveal her knife. "I had a soldier remove that rock out of the handle; she's in the hospital right now, in fact. But safer for me to use."

"For what?" Jasmin asked, but she had already guessed what was happening.

"To torture you." Wasp grinned, showing her sharp teeth, before stabbing the knife into the hybrid's shoulder.

Chapter 64

WARNING: Lots of blood, pain, and psychopathic Wasps in this chapter. You're welcome to skip this if you feel uncomfortable with any of those things.

Especially the psychopathic Wasps.

Jasmin bit her tongue as the deadly blade pierced through her scales. Blood was swelling heavily out of the wound, and a sharp pang of pain rang through her entire body. Wasp studied her face, seeming to be slightly disappointed at the lack of emotion.

"Not enough for you?" She asked, withdrawing the blood-covered knife painfully slowly. She swiftly stabbed it into her side. Jasmin's talon instinctively reached down to her ribs, but the chains restrained her from doing so. She gritted her teeth as the HiveWing queen twisted the hilt, feeling the obsidian narrowly missing her intestines.

Enough to make me feel pain, but not enough to kill me, Jasmin realized. *Smart.*

"Now." Wasp withdrew the weapon again, watching her prisoner collapse to the floor. "Give me the answers, and I won't hurt you again. Where are they?"

"Who?" Jasmin panted.

"You know who I'm talking about," The older dragon snapped, and grabbed her wing. Jasmin flinched. "The flamesilk and LeafWing dragonet."

Jasmin promptly spat at the HiveWing. Wasp growled, and raked her sharp claws over her wing. Jasmin winced.

"Where are they?" Wasp repeated. "All of them, including the HiveWing dragonet and SilkWing."

"I won't tell you." Jasmin glared up at her attacker. The queen hissed in annoyance, and then slammed her head into the hard stone floor. Jasmin felt her head spin, and felt sharp talons cut her forehead. A thin line of blood trickled out of her mouth.

"I will be seeing you tomorrow," Wasp turned and walked away, wiping Jasmin's knife on a white silk fabric. "I will be expecting more answers tomorrow, though I wouldn't mind more violence."

She tossed a piece of bread and placed a cup of water on the floor, where Jasmin could barely reach. The soft white cloth fluttered close by.

When the vicious HiveWing was finally gone, Jasmin slumped up onto the wall, watching red patterns blooming on the white cloth like spring flowers. Her shoulder ached from the stab, and her side felt like someone had set it ablaze.

She reached up, the heavy chains dragging her talons down, and felt the shallow cut on her head, wishing more than anything to share fresh apricots with the RainWings and talk to Coyote at night, careless of what was happening in the real world, before dropping her arm and falling unconscious.

Chapter 65

WARNING: Lots of blood, pain, and psychopathic Wasps in this chapter. You're welcome to skip this if you feel uncomfortable with any of those things.

Jasmin woke up to a sharp flash of pain in her ribs. She snapped open her eyes, and let out a small groan. The injuries had not healed yet, though the cut on her wing and forehead had dried overnight. She winced as she shifted in a position where she could inspect her wounds more carefully.

The stab to her shoulder was still bleeding, but it was slowing down to a trickle. Wasp had pierced into her scales deeper than she'd expected. Jasmin flexed her arm and immediately stopped when it screamed at her to stop.

The wound on her side was deeper, and she wriggled for a moment, and finally managed to grab the white fabric Wasp had left behind. She hissed at the clunkiness and restriction of the chains, and after a moment of struggling, finally pressed it firmly against the bleeding gash. Jasmin clenched her teeth as the pain worsened, but kept still.

"I see you still didn't eat your breakfast." She looked up to see Wasp staring disapprovingly at her. "Be quick, or I'll start before you eat."

Jasmin let the cloth fall, and stretched out to grab hold of the piece of stale bread. Her ribs shrieked in protest.

After she finished eating, Wasp drew a weapon out of her pouch, but this time it was different. This weapon was a knife, but the iron edge had a wickedly sharp curve to it. The HiveWing then carried in a bucket of water, with something swimming inside. Jasmin flinched as she recognized the long, slippery fish inside.

Electric eels.

Wasp stepped closer to Jasmin, but she held her head high.

"They're in the Poison Jungle, am I right?" Wasp hissed, holding up the knife.

"Wrong." Jasmin met her eyes. "As always."

Wasp raised her knife and cut the hybrid on the arm. Jasmin felt the blade slice through her upper arm. The pain wasn't bad, as she'd had worse injuries in the Scorpion Den.

The other wounds, on the other talon...

"So they aren't in the Poison Jungle?" Wasp asked, and this time, she held up her bucket of dangerous eels. Jasmin shrank back.

"Yes." She looked on warily as Wasp held the bucket over her head.

"Do not lie to me," Wasp snarled. "I know when you are lying."

"I stand by my statement." Jasmin growled. The chains that held her by the wrists was digging in between her scales, and she could feel something wet trickle out of the metal shackles.

"A lying dragon must be punished," Wasp continued, a smile spreading onto her cold face. She let go of the bucket.

Chapter 66

Jasmin gasped as cold water hit her entire body. Her wounds stung as she recognized it as ocean water. The bucket crashed into her head and fell onto the stone floor.

The eels caught in her horns, wings, tail, and legs. They thrashed for a bit, and then started emitting dangerous blue sparks.

Jasmin let out a scream as white-hot pain slithered through her scales and entered her veins. She hung from the chains, thrashing and twitching uncontrollably. Wasp watched on, grinning cruelly as Jasmin writhed, half in the air, half on the ground.

Jasmin beat her wings hard as she could, flinging off the electric eels. She slammed her tail against the wall, forcing off any eels that landed on it to fly off. She shook her head violently, and let out another piercing cry of agony. The puddle of water around her was a pool of death and electricity.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, the eels did their last flop on the sizzling wet stone and fell still, dead at last. Jasmin heaved, her entire body shaking.

"Now you know what happens to dragons that lie to me," Wasp smirked, and turned away, shutting the barred doors. Jasmin stared blankly after her, her throat rubbed raw from screaming and salt.

"Next time, do not say the wrong things, or the punishments will continue."

Jasmin rested her head against the wall, her wings instinctively covering her weak, injured body. She felt exhausted and pained all over, her wounds stinging from the saltwater. She still felt the aching prickle on her scales, and Jasmin closed her eyes, wishing away the strange sensation of being so vulnerable to harm and pain.

Maybe sleep will fix this all.

Chapter 67

Jasmin still felt every single one of her injuries and still-sizzling electricity of the eels when she woke up in her dream to find Qibli standing in front of her again.

"Jasmin! I know we promised Kinkajou she'd get a chance to talk- Woah." He stopped, noticing her fresh wounds. "Are you okay? Was there a battle? I don't think Tsunami said anything about a fight."

"Qibli." Jasmin grinned half-heartedly. "Hi. Don't worry, I'm fine."

"What happened?" Qibli asked, and concerned expression crossed his face. "Not a battle?"

"No. It's nothing serious." Jasmin winced as she gingerly touched the bloody wound on her side.

"So what happened?" He frowned at her clear pain.

"Nothing much." Jasmin shrugged.

"Come on, those injuries didn't come from nowhere." Qibli raised his eyebrows.

"Just scouting the jungle. Everything's fine," Jasmin lied. "Just a feral panther."

"Really?" She could see that he was still not convinced. "Well, if you say so."

"So...what's happening back at Pyrrhia?" Jasmin changed the subject quickly. "You were saying something about Kinkajou?"

"Oh, right. Kinkajou's still busy with school, so she couldn't find time to dreamvisit you." Qibli said. "Luna's alright, you can tell your friends that. Jerboa's taking care of her until she's well enough to travel back."

"Tell her not to come back. Not just yet," Jasmin warned. "Pantala's isn't in its safest state right now, and the HiveWings found out about the Poison Jungle."

"Alright," Qibli suddenly turned around, analyzing the dark, stone background around them. "Uh, are you sure you're still in the Poison Jungle?"

"Yeah, I am," Jasmin's thoughts raced for a believing lie for the smart SandWing. "I'm in a cave right now, near the river. Exploring, you know?"

"Hm. Alright." Qibli said. "Remember to stay safe-"

Jasmin yelped as something sharp prodded her awake. She snapped open her eyes to find Wasp standing over her again, holding a thin, pointed knife.

Stay safe. Qibli's last words echoed in her mind.

As if I can when I'm living in my worst nightmare.

Chapter 68

Three days could not have passed any slower than it could when Wasp was constantly trying to pry out information from Jasmin, with endless, unique ways to torture her when the hybrid refused to tell her anything. Qibli hadn't visited her in the past days, and Jasmin was slowly going hysterical from the pain and claustrophobia. The chains were never off, and her wrists were rubbed raw from the digging metal.

One of her many near-death situations in the prison had been getting attacked by the biggest wolves she'd seen in her life. One of them had scratched her in the right eye, and she couldn't see through the wounded eye.

Jasmin rested against the wall, chains clanging noisily above her. The torture from today had been more severe than the ones earlier on, but she had still not given away anything useful. She closed her eyes, pain sparking in the shoulder that refused to heal. Jasmin slipped away into sleep, hoping that someone she knew could drag her away from the pain and suicidal thoughts.

Something poked her sharply in the arm. Jasmin yelped, and curled her wings around her. The hybrid's scales automatically turned fear-green, as touch always meant pain.

"Jasmin? Hey. Are you alright?" She opened her unwounded eye to find a familiar ice-blue dragonet standing anxiously in front of her.

"Winter." Jasmin breathed, relieved, and slowly sat back up. "Hi. Good to see you. I'm fine."

"As if I can't see those injuries." Winter snorted. "Come on, I know what you told Qibli, and I know a feral panther would never be able to touch a single scale on you. What's going on? You weren't with the others when Turtle and Tsunami evacuated most of the uninfected SilkWings and LeafWings to Pyrrhia."

"Wait, what? They've gone to Pyrrhia?" Jasmin blinked.

"Yes!" Winter shouted. She winced at his loud voice. "Your friends found the cure to Wasp's mind-control, so they tested it out, but everything went wrong and the cure wasn't actually a cure! Blue and Swordtail are infected, and so is about half of the LeafWing population! And you weren't there to see what was going on!"

"I know." Jasmin sighed. "I know I wasn't there, Winter. I was here in Wasp's prison the entire time."

"I know," Winter looked at her wounds and scratched eye. "i figured out you were probably being tortured or something.

"Now, tell me everything."

Chapter 69

Jasmin reluctantly explained everything to Winter, how Wasp had captured her and tortured her and tried prying out the truth.

And then Winter told her about the Breath of Evil, how they'd smoked the 'cure' to the mind-control, but the Heart of Salvation was actually the roots of the plant, how almost half of the LeafWings as well as Blue and Swordtail had been infected, and how Tsunami had led the SilkWings from the Chrysalis and the remaining LeafWings to Pyrrhia.

"That sounds...like a lot." Jasmin sighed. "I wish I was there."

"Luna's gathering a group of dragons from all ten tribes to go back to Pantala and find the real cure to the mind-control," Winter explained. "Moon for the NightWings, Qibli for the SandWings, Pineapple for the RainWings, Lynx for the IceWings, Bullfrog for the MudWings, Sundew for the LeafWings, Cricket for the HiveWings, and Luna for the SilkWings. Oh, and some dragon called Sky is coming for the SkyWings, as well as a talking scavenger called Wren."

"A talking scavenger?" Jasmin mused, recalling an early memory of a trip to Positivity with Deathbringer. They'd met a scavenger who'd been searching for her dragon, and reluctantly, they'd helped her fly to Burn's stronghold. "Well, alright. When are they leaving?"

"Soon," Winter confirmed. "Actually, I think they've just left."

"Oh. They'll need to be careful." Jasmin saw the IceWing fading away. "I think I'm waking up. Probably Wasp's waking me up again. See you soon."

Jasmin opened her eye to see, to her surprise, that Wasp wasn't standing over her again. The HiveWing had her body turned to look into another cell, where Jasmin could hear voices.

She probably has a prisoner every week, She thought darkly. *Glad I get a break.*

Jasmin watched Wasp turning back to her.

"I've got more prisoners," The queen announced gleefully. "Don't worry, you'll still get the same amount of torture until you actually tell me something useful, dragonet."

Jasmin tiredly nodded her head, waiting as Wasp entered her cage.

"Just know," She hissed, grabbing the hybrid's arm. "Just know, that you'll stay here for the rest of your pitiful life, until I pass the death sentence."

Jasmin recoiled as Wasp twisted her arm, breaking it with a *snap*.

"I won't tell you anything," Jasmin growled. "And you know that. Just kill me, would you?"

"Lucky for you, it won't be long." A huge, evil grin broke through Wasp's face. "Because I'm going to execute you tomorrow."

Chapter 70

"Come on, time to go!" Wren woke up to the loud voice. "Wren! Wake up!"

"I'm already awake." She sat up and saw Tsunami, the SeaWing that had arrived in Pyrrhia a few days ago. Sky was still snoring softly, curled up next to her.

"Sky! Come on, time to go." Wren poked at the small, pale orange dragon. Sky opened his eyes blearily.

"Hm?" He stretched, yawning. "I was having a really good dream! With lots and lots of snails and baby turtles!"

"Nice dream, but we need to go," Wren patted his head. "Everyone's waiting."

"Stop dawdling and let's fly!" Tsunami shouted impatiently. "Pineapple! Stop sleeping!"

"Come on." Wren lifted herself onto Sky's back, fitting in between his large wings. He beat his wings, hard, and they took off after Tsunami.

"Are we going to turn invisible right now?" Luna, the elegant-green SilkWing asked. Sundew, a dark green and gold-flecked dragon from Pantala, had been presented the Gift of Stealth from the IceWing queen.

"Not right now," Sundew decided. "We might lose each other. I'll use the Gift of Stealth if we're in real trouble."

"Alright." Luna veered away. Sky faltered in the air slightly as the SilkWing narrowly missed him and flew next to Pineapple, a rainforest dragon.

"Woah!" Wren scrambled to grab his wing, and hauled herself up.

"Sorry, sorry!" Sky cried. Wren could literally feel him bursting with excitement. "Wren! Isn't this so amazing? I wonder if there are any cute and adorable new animals! Ooh, maybe a new kind of *snail!* Or a baby turtle!"

"Probably. Or maybe a bunch of giant snail-crushing tigers," Wren grinned. "And don't forget, we've got dragons who are being controlled by this evil breath thing."

"Leaf's got evil breath," Sky shot higher into the air, and Wren had to hold on to stay on his back as he did a dive. "At least, in the morning he does."

"If I fall off, I'll make you smell those weird fruits that tasted like-AARGH!" Wren screamed as Sky landed head-first into the ocean. She swam up to the surface, spitting and sputtering out the salty taste. "THOSE PAPAYAS ARE GOING RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE AS SOON AS WE GET BACK HOME, SKY!"

"Sorry, sorry!" Sky said again, though this time his pale blue eyes were crinkled in amusement as he laughed. "What about instead of the fruits, I make you an adorable little hat-"

"You're the one who's going to have a hat," Wren clambered back onto the little dragon. "There'll be a turtle on top, and you won't be able to reject it!"

"A turtle?" Sky gasped, lighting up as he shook out his wings.

"Hey, you two, are you guys alright?" They looked up to see Qibli, a SandWing with a scar on his snout, peering down at them. Moon, a small black dragon with silver scales speckled under her wings and one teardrop-like scale under each dark green eye, was gliding down towards them.

"Come on, we'll need to be quick to catch up with the others." She waited for Sky to take off again before picking up pace and flying after the other dragons, who were getting smaller by every second.

Chapter 71

Jasmin was shaken awake as two HiveWing guards rattled her chains. She blinked as they unlocked her wrists, though they immediately grabbed hold of them. The HiveWings led her out of the cage, where two more guards were waiting for them.

"Finally." Wasp hissed as Jasmin was dragged into a large, luxurious room. The four HiveWings let go of her, and surrounded her with a spear in their talons.

"My favorite time of the day," The HiveWing queen grinned, showing sharp white teeth. "You're execution."

"Any final words?" She asked. This was it. Jasmin was free from the dark cage and restricted cages. Though her tail was still in its metal device. A chain hung around her neck, clasped onto a piece of metal in the ground. It was thick enough for most dragons that had been weakened with a broken arm and other severe injuries to never attempt escape, but Jasmin could see she was strong enough to break through.

Though I did spend almost five days in torture, She thought grimly.

"I do, actually." Jasmin lifted her head high. Her muscles were clenched tight, ready to break out anytime.

"Oh?" Wasp was right outside the circle of HiveWing guards. "Say it, then. Beg as much as you want, but it won't work."

"But I'm not begging for mercy." Jasmin grinned. She jerked her head, snapping the chain in half, and swept her tail in a low arc, unbalancing the dragons around her. Wasp shrieked disbelievingly as Jasmin opened her jaws, shooting deadly black venom everywhere.

Jasmin grabbed the nearest HiveWing and broke his neck. Soon,

everyone was on the ground except for her. She crouched down besides the HiveWing queen, who was slowly fading into unconscious.

"I'm here to say, I'm not dying that easily, Wasp. But you are."

Chapter 72

Jasmin needed to get out of the place. She knew that more HiveWings would come in soon. She wasn't completely sure that Wasp was entirely dead, but there wasn't much time to check.

I'd better get going, Jasmin thought, and ran out of the room. She paused as she saw a glass case with hundreds of weapons. There, in the right end, was her knife, the lava rock right besides it.

Jasmin glanced around before smashing the fragile glass, and grabbed her knife and rock. She raced out of the palace as quickly as possible, and was relieved to find fresh air and an open sky waiting for her.

I'm free, Jasmin thought, relieved. *Finally.*

Now I can get back to Pyrrhia.

Jasmin had managed to sneak past the entrance, flying over the walls to reach dry, green grass. She sighed as she felt the soft soil touch her claws, relieved to feel anything but hard stone.

The chain was still around her neck, and her arm was still broken. She needed to be careful and quick to find the group of SilkWings that were still in Pantala.

The ones not infected by Wasp's mind control, of course.

I'll check Jewel Hive first, Jasmin decided. *Maybe I'll find Tau or Cinnabar or even Morpho.*

She flew to the Hive, relieved to find it close by. The hybrid landed near the structure, careful not to be seen.

They wouldn't be here; it was too close to Jewel Hive, where any of them could be caught in an instant.

But maybe further away, with a water source...Aha!

Jasmin had scouted further away from Jewel Hive, searching through every rabbit burrow and cave, when she finally heard hushed whispers behind large bushes. Jasmin carefully slipped through the thorns to find-

SilkWings!

Chapter 73

A large group of SilkWings, all of them staring in fright, were huddled around a lake, and a tiny light purple dragonet started to cry.

"Hush, Sweet. Don't worry, there's nothing to worry about." A SilkWing with silvery pink scales whispered, and the dragonet's cries soon died down to a whimper.

"Wasp isn't here," Jasmin reassured, looking back to make sure no HiveWings had followed her here. "She's injured, and out unconscious. I'm not from her army."

"How can we know?" A dark blue SilkWing growled. He spread his wings threateningly, shielding Sweet, the dragonet, and the light pink dragon. "Don't trust her, Silver."

"Jasmin? Is that you?" Jasmin looked around wearily to find Cinnabar looking at her.

"Yeah." She gazed around at the group of terrified SilkWings. "Winter- my friend from Pyrrhia- told me about your situation. You guys aren't going to Pyrrhia?"

"We are. But we're going as fast as the slowest dragons can go." The SilkWing twisted her head to look at her small back wing. "The youngest dragonets get tired easily, and the older dragons need to rest once in a while. And I can't fly," She added with a scowl.

"You're in charge, right?" Jasmin asked, and winced as her right arm touched the ground. She gingerly lifted the broken arm again, careful not to move it much. "You have a map to Pyrrhia?"

"Actually, I'm not in charge," Cinnabar said with a shrug. "Io is. You know, the dark purple SilkWing over there. Go see Spider for that arm; it looks bad."

"It's broken," Jasmin informed. "And sure, I'll go ask Io for some directions."

"Don't forget to see that arm!" The dark red SilkWing called after her.

Jasmin limped over to a SilkWing with dark purple scales with hints of indigo-blue. Her large wings were dotted with light aquamarine.

"Are you Io?" She said.

"Yup." Io looked up from a piece of paper. "And you're Jasmin, right?"

Jasmin nodded.

"You were traveling with Swordtail?" Io asked. "Dark blue and orange SilkWing?"

"You know him?" The hybrid stared at the older dragon.

"He's my brother." Io smiled. "So, you're here for the map, right?"

"I am. Is that the map?"

"See for yourself." Io handed her the piece of paper. Jasmin gasped; hundreds of islands dotted the blue background, arrows pointing to one place, then to the other.

And at the top right corner, Jasmin could see the edge of the Kingdom of Sand.

"That's how to get to the Distant Kingdoms," Io said. "I made an extra copy in case I need to destroy this one. You can have this."

"But- if you do lose this one-" Jasmin started, surprised.

"We'll be fine," Io reassured. "I've memorized this thing already, so I'll guide everyone to safety."

"Alright." Jasmin folded the precious piece of paper reluctantly, pushing it inside the sheathe of her knife. "Thanks."

"I know Swordtail's already captured by Wasp," Io said sadly. "He's guarding the SilkWings so they don't escape. But a group of dragons are on the way here to save them. Good luck; maybe you'll see them on the way."

"Good luck to you as well." Jasmin said, green eyes meeting light aquamarine. "I hope I see you there."

Chapter 74

Sundew could feel the tension and excitement from the dragons around her. The group, dragons from all ten tribes, were on a mission to save Pantala from the Breath of Evil's reign.

Moon and Qibli, the NightWing and SandWing of the group, were looping around each other, laughing and swooping close to the ocean. Luna hauled Pineapple up for the fourth time, as the RainWing always fell asleep while flying.

Wren and Sky, meanwhile, were zooming through the clouds and chasing after Lynx, a blue-freckled IceWing not much older than Sundew herself. Tsunami was farther ahead, scouting a way and looking out for danger. Bullfrog flew quietly next to Luna, staring into the dark waters.

"Do you think Blue's alright?" That was Cricket. Sundew sighed, turning to find the HiveWing dragonet looking anxiously at her. "What if Wasp made him do all sorts of horrible things? He'll feel so guilty and-"

"That's why we're here, right?" Sundew interrupted. "To save everyone and find out who's the scavenger in Snowfall's vision."

"But...can we really trust her?" Luna overheard their conversation and but in. "She wasn't very nice to you when you first arrived, wasn't she?"

"Snowfall's visions are our only clues right now," Cricket argued. "We need to trust her. She's convinced Wren to come along, right?"

That was true. The young IceWing queen had asked Wren, a scavenger who could speak Dragon, to participate in their mission, along with Sky the SkyWing dragonet. Wren had reluctantly agreed, though saying that they'd need to keep Sky safe.

"I guess." Luna frowned. "Well, anyways. I thought you had another

friend with you. Jasmin, right?"

"Jasmin..." Sundew sighed again. She wondered where the dragonet from the Distant Kingdoms was. There was no way she could have missed the camp; an assassin would have found her way out pretty easily.

But Sundew wasn't very worried. Jasmin could fight her way out of anything, and she'd proven that by killing the patrol of HiveWings when they'd first met.

"I wonder how she is," Cricket echoed her thoughts. "Maybe she found a way to free everyone from the Breath of Evil, but we left without her."

"Yeah. Probably." Sundew agreed. "Come on. We should hurry up. Tsunami'll get impatient-"

"Moon!" Qibli's voice cut her off. They whipped around to find Moon diving to a nearby island.

And a HiveWing patrol was on their way there.

Chapter 75

Jasmin was dreaming. More like having a nightmare. She was in Wasp's dungeon again, and her most horrible memory emerged.

"You don't say anything at all," Wasp snarled. "This is getting boring. If you don't say anything right now, I will set these monsters on you."

She dragged six huge, gray wolves into the cage, their mouths snapping at Jasmin's direction.

"Where are they now?" Wasp asked. Jasmin glared at her, not saying anything.

"I'll give you ten seconds."

"Ten..."

"Nine..."

Should she say anything? The hybrid opened her mouth, then shut it tight. No way she was going to betray Sundew and Tsunami.

"Five..."

"Four..."

"Three..."

Wasp's mouth stretched into a thin, menacing smile. Her talons loosened from the chains on the wolves. Jasmin shook, though she didn't say anything.

"Two," The HiveWing said. "One."

She released the chains, and all six wolves lunged forward.

Jasmin's eyes snapped awake. She whipped around wildly, only to find herself safely away from Wasp.

Just a dream...

She shivered, standing up. It was dawn, and she'd followed the map to an island around halfway through the path to safety. Jasmin peered around from her perch on a tall, sturdy tree. She'd slept there to make sure no one saw her, though the cold wasn't helping with her injuries.

Jasmin was pretty sure she'd broken a rib bone, for her side ached every time she breathed. She looked away from the rising sun; the colors reminded her of blood and pain and Wasp.

What's that noise...?

She looked around as her ears heard a scream. *There!*

Black dots moved on an island not far away from her, and Jasmin stiffened as she recognized the voice.

Moon?

Jasmin spread her wings and launched into the air, wincing as she felt a twinge of pain in her broken arm. She beat her wings as hard as she could, flying almost as fast as a SkyWing.

Don't worry, Moon. I'm coming to save you.

Though now you might be stronger than me.

Chapter 76

"Qibli! Come back here!" Tsunami shouted. The SandWing dragonet launched himself towards the island, a blur of dusty yellow.

"He's got bees in his brain," Sundew muttered.

"He does. That's how he always gets in trouble at Jade Mountain." Tsunami sighed, before diving after him. She reached the island to find Moon surrounded by a patrol of yellow and black dragons.

HiveWings.

Tsunami snarled, and leaped in front of them. She slammed her tail hard on one of their heads, and bit his tail. The HiveWing let out a screech.

"**Kill them all,**" They said at the same time, their emotionless voices sending shivers down her spine.

"You're welcome to try," Tsunami grinned, and kicked them in the chest, hard.

"Qibli!" Luna swooped down and dug her claws into a HiveWing's back. The SilkWing threw the dragon into a nearby tree. A breeze whipped past Tsunami, and familiar black venom splashed onto a red HiveWing's shoulder. She shrieked, rolling on the ground.

"Nice job, Pineapple," Tsunami panted, attacking another HiveWing.

"Everyone come closer to me!" Sundew called from the sky. Wren, riding on top of Sky, flew over to her, and Moon struggled out of a HiveWing's grip and launched into the air. Tsunami prepared to fly after her, but three HiveWings knocked her to the ground before she could do anything. The SeaWing dragonet hissed, trying her best to get out of the way, red blood trickling down her forehead. She looked around to see Qibli, Pineapple, and Bullfrog surrounded

by HiveWings as well, unable to get to Sundew.

"What-?" Tsunami started as something pulled a HiveWing off her back. She could see a chain dangling in the air, and a shadow moved on the ground shaped like a dragonet.

And then flashes of purple, turquoise, navy, and silver appeared, and Tsunami could see familiar green eyes as the mysterious dragon bit down, hard, on another HiveWing's tail.

"Jasmin?" Tsunami blinked. Someone gasped from above.

"Run," The hybrid hissed, before stabbing down with a knife. "Get to Pantala.

"Don't care about me. Just run."

Chapter 77

Jasmin gritted her teeth as a HiveWing slammed into her broken arm. She slit his throat with her knife, and kicked him away. Tsunami sat there, gaping at her.

Jasmin grabbed a HiveWing and stabbed her in the heart; without her tail-barb, she was relying on her knife. She spun around as something sharp scratched her wing, and flicked her lava rock at the brown-yellow HiveWing. Jasmin hissed as another HiveWing attacked her from behind-

She froze. *Wasp?*

The malicious HiveWing stood in front of her, the bucket of electric eels in her talons. Jasmin stopped, terrified, as the queen stepped closer. She opened her mouth with a silent scream as cold water splashed on her face again, wriggling eels on her face-

The wolves were back, tearing at he wings, her tail, her face-

Sharp pain entered her arm as Wasp broke it with a flick of her talons-

A burst of screaming as burning hot silk slid on her scales-

Wasp's huge face looming over her, smiling as she plunged the wickedly curved knife into her chest-

"Jasmin! Wake up!" She whirled around, to find Wasp surrounding her at all sides. Jasmin smashed her tail at her, but Wasp ducked and grabbed her wing.

Jasmin's vision swirled, black washing over her eyes. She blinked, and saw Sundew peering at her with worry, and she blinked again to find Wasp looking down at her again

Then everything blurred and she slumped to the ground, unconscious.

Chapter 78

"Did you fall asleep waiting for me again?" Jasmin blinked awake to find herself in the rainforest. She was in front of the tunnel to the Kingdom of Sand again, and standing a few steps away was Coyote, with the same playful spark in his eyes.

"Coyote?" She sat up. "But- but you're dead!"

"I don't feel like I am," He wrinkled his snout. "But if you say so."

"You are-" The hybrid started.

"Jasmin." She turned around to see another Coyote.

What in the moons...?

"Why are you here but also there at the same time?" She asked. The new Coyote smiled.

"That's your dream me. This is your real me," He said simply.

"No, that can't be," Jasmin blurted. "Coyote was killed by the NightWings two years ago because he was caught wandering through the tunnels. Deathbringer told me so."

"Ah...Deathbringer," Coyote sighed. "He didn't tell you, then? I'm dreamvisiting you, Jasmin."

"What-?" Jasmin stopped. "But- but that can't be!"

"But it can." He let out a breath. "It's a long story."

"Then tell me," Jasmin demanded.

"I will, I will." Coyote said softly. "Over two thousand years ago, I hatched from a snake's egg by a powerful SandWing animus.

"I was born as Jerboa the Second."

"Jerboa?" Jasmin was cut off again by her father.

"No interruptions."

"Alright."

"My 'mother', as you'd call her, was running away from Queen Scorpion, the queen at that time. My mother- her name's Jerboa- made me because she wanted a dragonet so badly, but couldn't see her beloved anymore. So Jerboa enchanted the snake egg to become a SandWing egg, who would never die from old age.

"I didn't know at that time, but Jerboa altered my personality, enchanted me to become more likable and easier to live with. But it didn't work so well, so she changed me into a NightWing named Shade and kicked me out.

"So I did what seemed like the best choice. I ran and hid somewhere no one could find me until two thousand years later, when I was sure everybody had forgotten about my mother. I flew until I found a NightWing, who told me where the NightWing kingdom was. Her name was Quickstrike, and she was the smartest and most beautiful dragon ever. We had a dragonet together, and we named him...

Here he hesitated.

"What? What did you name him?" Jasmin asked.

"We named him...Deathbringer."

Chapter 79

"Deathbringer?" Jasmin gasped. "*Deathbringer?!*"

"Yes," Coyote nodded. "Please don't hate me for keeping all this a secret. I'm so sorry, Jasmin. But after Quickstrike died, I met Euphoria, and, well, I didn't want to tell you that you have a half-brother was in a different tribe."

"Wait a second," Jasmin interrupted. "You were a NightWing, right? How did you become a SandWing?"

"The spell to turn me into a NightWing was only temporary," Coyote explained. "A few years after Quickstrike died, the spell wore off and the NightWings kicked me out."

"I...have a half-brother?" Jasmin stammered. "And he happens to be Deathbringer?"

"Yes. I'm so sorry," He repeated. "I thought you knew."

"You thought I knew that you weren't dead?" Jasmin cried, furious. "You didn't think that every day for a year that I've been wondering why you weren't coming to visit me anymore? You thought I wouldn't notice if my own father suddenly disappeared without a trace? You didn't think that after I heard you'd been killed, I've detested the NightWings ever since? You didn't think anything, anything about how Mother and I have felt ever since you've *abandoned* us?!"

"I know, but it wasn't my choice," Coyote began. "The NightWings captured me and-"

"I don't care!" Jasmin snapped. "You could have tried to escape! But for one year, you've decided to keep everything secret? And not even try to visit one last time?"

"I told you, I tried my best-"

Jasmin forced her eyes open, waking up on the island, covered in sand.

"Good, you're awake." She stared up to find a white IceWing with light blue freckling her wings. "Jasmin, right? I'm Lynx. The others are already gone, and we've decided for me to wait until you've woken up. Do you feel okay?"

"I'm fine." Jasmin stood up, shaking sand out of her wings. "You can go catch up with the rest."

"Really?" Lynx asked. "Well, alright. I'd better be quick. See you back in Pyrrhia!"

Jasmin watched as the friendly dragon flew off into the distance, leaving her alone with the heavy burden of knowing the sudden, hard truth weighing down her shoulders.

Chapter 80

Jasmin examined the map for a moment, glancing around. It was night, and she'd travelled for the entire day, hoping to see a glimpse of Jerboa's hut.

"If I go here, I should end up on an island just near the coast," She muttered to herself. "Which is...ah. There it is."

Jasmin half-crashed into the island, exhausted. She was struggling to fly long distances she'd used to take with ease, and her arm was really starting to hurt.

Maybe I should *have gone to Spider when I had the chance,* Jasmin thought. She searched the island for any enemies before digging a shallow area at the foot of a tall palm tree.

Jasmin closed her eyes, and slipped into an unsettled sleep.

"Do you know what this is?" Wasp held up a pair of tweezers holding a strand of bright, smoking silk.

Jasmin remained silent.

"It's flamesilk," Wasp drew closer. "As you'd know, traveling with a certain runaway SilkWing."

She dropped the silk on Jasmin's wings. Jasmin felt a white-hot pain sizzle on her scales, and she screamed as the flaming silk burned through her wings...

She sat up with a start, heart thumping rapidly.

Just a dream.

Jasmin waited for her breathing to slow down before glancing

around. The sun was already rising, and the sand turned orange from the bleeding light.

Better get moving, She thought, standing up. She examined the map for a moment. *If I'm fast enough, I'll get to Pyrrhia by nightfall.*

Jasmin rose to the air, wincing at a twinge in her arm. *I think I'll go to the rainforest first thing to get my injuries healed.*

After a while of flying and examining the map, Jasmin looked up.

"Pyrrhia should be right over there..." She stopped.

There, right in front of her, shadowed by glittering stars and darkness of midnight, was the coast of the Kingdom of Sand.

Chapter 81

Jasmin arrived at the beach in a few minutes, and she landed heavily on the soft sand. A light nearby glowed brightly from the inside of a familiar wooden hut.

Jerboa's hut!

She limped over to the small structure, and reached out to knock the door. Jasmin felt a sudden stab of pain in her side and winced. She felt warm blood slide off her scales and drip onto the sand. Her head started pounding, and her vision swam.

What in all of Pyrrhia?

Jasmin craned her head to look back, and saw that the wound on her shoulder had a bright, angry red hint to it.

Infection.

She hadn't paid much attention to the knife wound, as her other ones had been much more serious.

She crumpled to the ground as every injury suddenly seemed to be ripped open by cruel talons.

I'm so close...! I can't fall unconscious now! Jasmin thought in despair.

Her body seemed to disagree with her. Her eyes blurred, and soon a sea of black engulfed Jasmin.

A/N: I'M SO SORRY I KNOW IT'S SHORT BUT I'VE BEEN BUSY OK????!!!!!

Chapter 82

Jasmin opened her eyes to find anxious green eyes looking into hers.

"Where...am I?" She croaked, struggling to stand up.

"She's awake!" The dragon with green eyes called. Jasmin recognized the bright yellow and pink scales immediately.

"Kinkajou?" She groaned, and looked around. "Where am I?"

"The rainforest, of course!" The RainWing cried. "Jasmin! I missed you! Jerboa found you dying in front of her door, so she took you inside and found help from Queen Glory."

"I'm back in Pyrrhia?" Jasmin asked. Her scales were sticky with green gloopy ointment, and her arm was in a sturdy leaf sling.

"Yes!" Kinkajou grinned. "And Moon and Qibli and everyone else! Actually, I think the SilkWings and LeafWings are here right now."

"Really?" Jasmin stood up and stumbled onto the ground. "Then I have to see them."

"You need rest!" Kinkajou protested, but Jasmin limped past her and ran towards the tunnel to the Kingdom of Sand.

"Oh, for moon's sake!" Kinkajou sighed, before following after her.

"Where are they?" Jasmin asked as they emerged from the tunnel. The bright, hot sun beat down on her scales, and she winced as the heat touched her wounds.

"Oh, right there in the Sancutary," Kinkajou led her to the land between the Ice and Sand kingdom. There, laughing and talking, were hundreds of dragons from all tribes. Jasmin's eye caught the familiar, bright blue and purple scales of one of the SilkWings. She

glanced around to see Blue talking with Cricket, Bumblebee shouting loudly at Sundew, who was sitting next to Willow. A caterpillar-green SilkWing was standing not far away, her tail entwined with Swordtail's.

"Here we are!" Kinkajou beamed, and Jasmin stood in silence at the huge crowd.

Sundew looked over Willow's shoulder, and finally saw Jasmin. The LeafWing immediately stood up and tapped Cricket urgently, nodding to her direction. The HiveWing dragonet stared past the crowd and gasped.

"Jasmin!" Cricket cried, running through the mass of LeafWings and SilkWings. "You're here! After all that time I thought you'd been taken over by Wa- are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Jasmin said faintly. "You're actually here. Everyone's here. Where- where's Moon and the others?"

"Over there." Cricket pointed to a group that stood slightly away from the crowd. There, Jasmin spotted Moon, Qibli, Winter, and Turtle.

"Come on! They were worried after Winter told everyone about your...well, anyways. They'll be glad!" Kinkajou guided Jasmin towards the group.

"Moon! Qibli! Winter! Turtle!" The RainWing yelped. "Guess who just turned up unconscious in the rainforest?"

Qibli turned around, and saw Jasmin.

"Jasmin!" He cried. "I knew it! I knew you'd be fine!"

Moon looked anxiously at her. "You really feel no pain?"

"Well, that'd be impossible," Jasmin joked. "With a broken arm and infected shoulder. But I feel better, yes."

"I was so worried!" The NightWing burst. "Queen Snowfall- the new IceWing queen- had a vision about you. You were in this dark cave

with chains and shackles and Wasp was just-"

"It doesn't matter," Jasmin interrupted. "I'm here right now, right? So let's enjoy that."

Chapter 83

Jasmin winced as Winter accidentally brushed past her shoulder.

"Watch it!" She growled.

"Sorry," Winter muttered. He dropped his voice to a low whisper. "Why is that SandWing looking at you?"

"What SandWing?" Jasmin turned to see a SandWing with dark freckled wings and longing black eyes.

Coyote.

Jasmin went towards her father without another word. Coyote unfurled his wings and wrapped them around her tightly. She held onto him, afraid that someone might come over and swoop him away like they did two or three years ago.

"I missed you," Jasmin said. "Never stay away for so long."

"I won't," Coyote whispered. "I escaped the NightWings a year ago, but I was afraid that you wouldn't remember or love me-"

"Never," She shook her head fiercely. "I'd never forget you or stop loving you or anything."

"And speaking of me, I want you to meet- well you've already met him- your half-brother." Coyote unraveled his hug. "As siblings, not enemies."

Jasmin saw Deathbringer shifting awkwardly besides Coyote.

"Hi," Jasmin said.

"Hi." He grinned slightly. "Long time no see?"

"As if." She snorted. "I saw you literally a few weeks ago. Or was that a month? I don't remember."

"Well, I don't care if it was," Deathbringer shrugged.

"You knew this all along, didn't you?" Jasmin asked.

"Yeah."

"Stupid rock-headed NightWing," She muttered.

"Hey, that's not how you're supposed to talk to your superior older half-brother who's like twice your size and age," Deathbringer had a glimmer to his eyes. "Or your former teacher."

"Oh come on," Jasmin protested. "I had exactly two years of training from you. That's not a lot."

"It isn't," He agreed. "Want to learn about how to paralyze someone with a dagger?"

"Gladly, after I say goodbye to my friends."

After a quick farewell, Jasmin and Deathbringer walked back through the tunnel, talking about the assassination expeditions they'd went on alone, and discussing new techniques, with Coyote staring right after them, a smile on his snout.

Chapter 84: The End!

This is the end of Assassin in Pantala! Thank you for reading till the very end and sticking with this fanfiction.

Wow, I really feel so proud after finishing this story at last and finding out I have so many dedicated readers.

Thank you all for waiting for Assassin in Pantala to update (quite slowly towards the end). I hope you'll enjoy my mini-story of Jasmin's life before all this drama if I decide I'll stop being lazy.

Bye!